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Aruba TODAY

On Top Of The News Email:news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel:+297 582-7800 Monday, December 30, 2013

OVER 1 MILLION SERVED

Tilda Elias hands a paper application to prospective Affordable Care Act marketplace enrollees after their on-line application stalled at a hospital in Doylestown, Pa. The Obama administration says following a December surge, more than 1.1 million people have now enrolled for health insurance through the federal government's improved website. (Mark Makela/The New York Times)

Federal health market surpasses landmark signups

**JOSH LEDERMAN
RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR**

Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — A December surge propelled health care sign-ups through the U.S. government's rehabilitated web-

site past the 1 million mark, the Obama administration said Sunday, reflecting new vigor for the problem-plagued federal insurance exchange. Combined with numbers for state-run markets due in January, that should put to-

tal enrollment in the new private insurance plans under President Barack Obama's health law at about 2 million people through the end of the year, independent experts said. That would be about two-thirds of the administra-

tion's original goal of signing up 3.3 million by Dec. 31, a significant improvement given the technical problems that crippled the federal market during October and much of November. The overall goal remains to enroll 7 million

people by March 31 when open enrollment for 2014 ends. Obama needs millions of mostly younger, healthy Americans to sign up to keep costs low for everyone.

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Republicans can count ways to Senate majority

DONNA CASSATA
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans count enough competitive races to challenge Democrats for control of the Senate in the 2014 elections, if only they can figure out what to do with the ultraconservative tea party movement. Crowded primaries in states such as Georgia, Iowa and North Carolina, where tea partiers and social conservatives are fighting for the nomination and pushing candidates farther to the right, worry many Republicans, especially after they saw their legitimate shots at a Senate majority slip away in 2010 and 2012 due to primaries that yielded weak candidates perceived as too extreme in the general election. Republicans need a net gain of six seats to capture control from Democrats, who effectively hold a 55-45 advantage now. But Democrats will be defending 21 of 35 seats to be decided in November, and President Barack Obama is looking like a major drag for them.

Midterm elections are often tough for a president's party in any event.

"History is with us, geography is with us and the president's signature legislative achievement is the most unpopular" law of his tenure, Rob Collins, executive director of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, said of Obama and his health care overhaul. Republicans inside and outside the Senate speak confidently about snatching open seats in West Virginia and South Dakota. They like their chances against Democratic incumbents in Republican-leaning Arkansas, Louisiana and Alaska and remain upbeat about Montana even if Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock names Lt. Gov. John Walsh to succeed Sen. Max Baucus, Obama's choice for U.S. ambassador to China. The looming question is whether Republicans undercut their solid shot with tea party-style candidates who fizzled out in Delaware, Colorado and Ne-

vada in 2010 and Indiana and Missouri in 2012. Georgia is keeping some Republicans awake at night. Eight candidates, including three members of the House of Representatives, are pursuing the open seat of retiring two-term Sen. Saxby Chambliss in a state that dramatically went Republican in 1994 and rarely has looked back. Georgia hasn't elected a

torate and a Washington outsider in a year when congressional approval is in single digits. Republicans are nervous about Rep. Paul Broun, who has said evolution and the Big Bang theory are "lies straight from the pit of Hell." Although the four-term Georgia congressman has avoided incendiary comments in his latest campaign, several Repub-

Georgia rules set the primary for May 20, but if no candidate gets 50 percent, a runoff occurs July 22. Several Republicans insist that establishment candidates will eventually prevail and the internal fights won't matter as Democrats struggle with the most contentious issue of the year — Obama's health care law — and the political damage from its many prob-



The U.S. Capitol is shown in Washington in December, 2013. Republicans count enough competitive races to challenge Democrats for control of the Senate in the 2014 elections, if only they can figure out what to do with the ultraconservative tea party movement.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

non-incumbent Democrat since 1998. A loss of the Republican-held seat would complicate any Republican math for a majority. The top Democratic hopeful is Michelle Nunn, CEO of the volunteer organization Points of Light and daughter of former moderate Democratic Sen. Sam Nunn. The younger Nunn's diligence gets high marks from Democrats and Republicans. She has raised more than \$1.7 million and campaigned with a purpose. While more attention has focused on Democrat Alison Lundergan Grimes, who is challenging Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell in Kentucky, in the marquee race of the cycle, Republicans say Nunn is the real deal. She stands as a moderate Democrat who could appeal to Georgia's elec-

licans privately fret about him winning the nomination. Looking to seize the edge in the free-for-all primary, Broun recently pounded rival Rep. Jack Kingston, considered more moderate, after Kingston suggested that Obama's health care law could be fixed. Kingston quickly backtracked on an issue that resonates with core Republican voters, but then came under criticism for saying poor children could pay a small fee or work cleaning up to receive school-subsidized lunches. Guy Cecil, executive director of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, argued that the presence of tea partiers in primaries is forcing all Republican candidates to race to the right. The result is nominees unacceptable in the general election, he said.

lems. "I think it may be the most difficult political yoke to carry in the history of American politics," said Georgia Republican Sen. Johnny Isakson. "Where else do you have something that affects everybody? And health care does." Democrats don't dispute that the troubled rollout of the health care website has hurt them. "There's no doubt Republicans are a little more gleeful," said John Anzalone, a Democratic pollster and adviser to North Carolina Democratic Sen. Kay Hagan, who is seeking a second term. "Who can say with a straight face that this has not been a bad month for Democrats?" But Anzalone added: "It's not a permanent thing. This is really about the political environment nationally. It evens out." □

Canadian Cruise ship passenger missing off Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— The U.S. Coast Guard was searching Sunday for a Canadian passenger who jumped off a Royal Caribbean Cruises ship as it motored off a remote Puerto Rican island toward the U.S. territory's mainland. In a Sunday statement, the Coast Guard identified the missing man as Tien Phuoc Nguyen, a 26-year-old Canadian citizen who was on the final night of a seven-night Caribbean cruise with his family. His hometown was not immediately provided.

He was last seen jumping overboard by other ship passengers late Saturday as the Adventures of the Seas was transiting east of Mona Island, a rugged, uninhabited island in a rough sea passage between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

Royal Caribbean spokeswoman Cynthia Martinez said Sunday that the captain immediately stopped the cruise ship, turned around and alerted local authorities after a passenger reported seeing a man going overboard late Saturday. In a Sunday email, Martinez said footage of the incident was also captured by the ship's cameras. The Coast Guard deployed helicopters and a patrol boat to find the missing passenger but no sign of him has turned up.

The FBI is investigating the circumstances which may have led the man to jump. When the U.S. Coast Guard assumed control of the search early Sunday, the cruise ship resumed its trip to Puerto Rico's capital of San Juan. A Royal Caribbean team was providing support to Nguyen's family, according to Martinez.

The Royal Caribbean ship was finishing its seven-night trip and returning to San Juan when he jumped overboard. □

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Federal health market surpasses landmark signups

Continued from front

"It looks like current enrollment is around 2 million despite all the issues," said Dan Mendelson, CEO of Avalere Health, a market analysis firm. "It was a very impressive showing for December."

The administration said that of the more than 1.1 million people now enrolled in the federal insurance exchange, nearly 1 million signed up in December. The majority came days before a pre-Christmas deadline for coverage to start in January. Compare that with a paltry 27,000 in October, the federal website's first, error-prone month.

"We experienced a welcome surge in enrollment as millions of Americans seek access to affordable health care coverage," Marilyn Tavenner, the head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said in a blog post announcing the figures. The numbers don't represent a full accounting for the country.

The federal website serves 36 states. Yet to be reported are December results from the 14 states running their own sites. Overall, states have been signing

up more people for most of the roll-out period than the federal government. But most of that has come from high performers such as California, New York, Washington, Kentucky and Connecticut. Some states continue to struggle with their exchanges.

Still, the end-of-year surge suggests that the HealthCare.Gov website now functioning better, the federal market may be starting to pull its weight. The windfall comes at a critical moment for Obama's sweeping health care law, which becomes "real" for many Americans on Jan. 1 when coverage through the exchanges and key patient protections kick in. The administration's concern now shifts to keeping the momentum going for sign-ups, and heading off problems that could arise when people who've already enrolled try to use their new insurance.

"They've got the front end of the system working really well," said insurance industry consultant Robert Laszewski. "Now we can move on to the next question: Do people really want to buy this?" He also estimated 2 million will probably be enrolled this year. The troubled roll-out of

Obama's health care law has led to declining approval ratings for Obama and his fellow Democrats, giving new life to Republicans who appeared weakened and fractured

November 2014 election when control of Congress will be at stake.

The new law is intended to expand coverage to millions of uninsured Americans and curb insurance

also expands Medicaid — the government program that provides health care coverage to poor and low-income Americans — to cover more people in states that accept it.



Rosemary Cabelo uses a computer at a public library to access the Affordable Health Care Act website, in San Antonio. The Obama administration says following a December surge, more than 1.1 million people have now enrolled for health insurance through the federal government's improved website.

(AP Photo/Eric Gay)

after forcing October's partial federal government shutdown. Republican lawmakers seized on the glitches to show they were right in trying to repeal "Obamacare." Democrats hope that as enrollment figures increase more Americans will see the benefits of the program. Health care reform could turn into the pivotal issue in the

industry abuses such as denying coverage to people with pre-existing medical conditions or setting lifetime caps on payments for medical expenses. The law set up new state and federal exchanges that serve as markets offering subsidized private insurance to middle-class Americans who don't have access to job-based coverage. The law

Tavenner said fixes to the website, overhauled to address widespread outages and glitches, contributed to December's figures. But the problems haven't totally disappeared. Thousands of people wound up waiting on hold for telephone help on Christmas Eve for a multitude of reasons, including technical difficulties. □



Sotomayor to start ball drop on New Year's Eve in Times Square

EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS
© 2013 New York Times

NEW YORK - Justice Sonia Sotomayor will return to her hometown for New Year's Eve to help lead one of New York City's most well-known rituals: the ball drop in Times Square. She will press the crystal button Tuesday night to lower the ball and lead the 60-second countdown to midnight, organizers of the event said Sunday. She will

be the first U.S. Supreme Court justice to perform the task.

Sotomayor, who is from the Bronx and joined the court in 2009, has often spoken of her love for New York City. This year, she complained that ordering takeout was much slower in Washington than in New York, and said she still jaywalked like a New Yorker.

She is one of four justices on the court from New

York City. Each one grew up in a different borough: Justice Antonin Scalia in Queens, Justice Elena Kagan in Manhattan and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in Brooklyn.

While it may be difficult to imagine Scalia on the stage in Times Square, Sotomayor has taken on a more public role as a justice, especially as she promoted her recent memoir, "My Beloved World." She has doled out



An actor portraying the comic book character Spiderman stands amidst falling confetti on the Hard Rock Cafe marquee during the annual New Years Eve confetti test in Times Square, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013, in New York.

(AP Photo/John Minchillo)

career advice on "Sesame Street," appeared on "The Daily Show" and even salsa-danced with a Univision anchor.

The Rockettes and Lady Gaga led the countdown in Times Square the past two years. Before that, the duty fell to a wide range of people, from Bill and Hillary Clinton and Colin L. Powell to a group of local high school students.

Sotomayor was selected because of her inspirational story of rising from a humble background to become the first Hispanic justice on the court, said Tim Tompkins, president of the Times Square Alliance. She has encouraged others to dream big, a nice message for a new year, he said.

"At its best, the new year is about pursuing dreams," Tompkins said Sunday. □

Bill Clinton will preside at de Blasio's NYC inaugural

MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ
© 2013 New York Times

NEW YORK - Former President Bill Clinton will swear in Bill de Blasio as New York City's 109th mayor at the inauguration ceremony Wednesday, the mayor-elect's transition team announced in a statement Saturday.

De Blasio served in Clinton's administration as a regional director of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and was campaign manager for Hillary Rodham Clinton's successful run for the Senate in 2000. Hillary

Clinton will also attend the inauguration. "I was honored to serve in President Clinton's administration and on Secretary Clinton's campaign for U.S. Senate, and I am honored again that they will both join our celebration for all of New York City," de Blasio said in the statement. "Wednesday's ceremony will be an event for every New Yorker from all five boroughs, and Chirlane and I couldn't be more excited to have President Clinton and Secretary Clinton stand with us," he said, referring to his wife, Chirlane McCray. □

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Man arrested in S. Colorado triple murder

DAN ELLIOTT

Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — A man suspected of killing three people and setting fire to a home in southern Colorado has been captured in Oklahoma after a nationwide manhunt, authorities said Sunday.

Harry Carl Mapps, 59, was captured at a motel in Roland, Oklahoma, on Saturday night, said Kirk Taylor, sheriff of Pueblo County, Colorado. No details of his arrest were released.

Taylor said Mapps was found using information developed by the U.S. Marshals Service in Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas. Mapps had lived in Oklahoma.

The Marshals Service issued a fugitive warrant for Mapps and said authorities were searching for him nationwide.

Mapps is wanted on charges of fatally shooting Kim Tuttle, 55; her husband, Reggie Tuttle, 51; and their daughter, Dawn Roderick, 33. Their bodies were found in the Tuttles' home in Rye after the house burned on Nov. 27.

The fire was ruled arson. □

Conn. gun owners rush to register weapons

SUSAN HAIGH

Associated Press

HARTFORD, Connecticut

(AP) — Connecticut gun owners are rushing to register certain firearms and ammunition that will be

claration forms so they can legally keep the items.

Under a wide-ranging gun control law, passed earlier this year in the wake of the Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting

folks were holding off on doing it in anticipation of a potential decision or something," Lawlor said, referring to pending legal challenges to the state law, which expanded the defi-

"One thing is clear," Lawlor said. "If you haven't registered it, on the following day, it is completely illegal contraband" starting on Jan. 1. The Connecticut Citizens Defense League, which is participating in a legal challenge of the new law, has been working to remind gun owners that the deadline to register and declare the assault weapons and high-capacity magazines is approaching quickly. "Many people are still not aware of the law itself, or the actual date of implementation," said Scott Wilson, president of the gun rights group. "While CCDL wholeheartedly believes that this law is unconstitutional, we want to make sure that law-abiding gun owners do not become felons on Jan. 1." Wilson said his organization is particularly concerned that people may not be aware they're affected by the law because many handgun magazines and semi-automatic rifle magazines with a capacity to hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition were sold standard along with guns before April 4, the last day people could legally purchase or sell those weapons and magazines in Connecticut. □



This evidence photo contained in a report of an investigation released by the Connecticut State Police Friday, Dec. 27, 2013, shows a weapon at the home where Adam Lanza lived with his mother in Newtown, Conn. Adam Lanza gunned down 20 first-graders and six educators with a semi-automatic rifle at Sandy Hook Elementary School on Dec. 14, 2012, in Newtown, after killing his mother inside their home.

(AP Photo/Connecticut State Police)

considered illegal contraband in the new year.

People have been lining up early in the morning at the state Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection's headquarters in Middletown in recent days to turn in applications for assault weapons certificates and high-capacity magazine dec-

in Newtown that killed 20 children and six educators, gun owners have until Tuesday to submit the paperwork.

Michael Lawlor, Gov. Daniel P. Malloy's undersecretary for criminal justice, predicted a flood of registrations over the final days of 2013.

"It sounds like a lot of these

inition of assault weapons in Connecticut to include more banned weapons. The law also bans the sale or purchase of magazines that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition. Like the newly defined assault weapons, existing magazines can be kept so long as they're registered with the state.

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Among Cuban exiles, an old toast goes silent

CHRISTINE ARMARIO

Associated Press

HAVANA/MIAMI (AP) — In their first years of exile from Cuba in the 1960s, Gustavo Pérez Firmat's family uttered the toast as a wish they anxiously waited to fulfill.

Pérez Firmat's parents and grandparents would proclaim "Next year in Cuba" as they lifted glasses of scotch at Christmas and New Year's Eve.

The words were uttered by thousands of Cubans who fled after Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution and settled in Miami and other cities around the world. In those days, they believed it was only a matter of time before the revolution would blow over and they could all return to their island home.

More than five decades have now passed. Pérez Firmat's parents are dead. He no longer makes the toast his father recited hopefully until his death in 2002.

"It would be too painful to do it today," said Pérez Firmat, an author and professor at Columbia University.

As another year approaches, some Cuban exiles will still toast to return to a land they last saw decades ago. But as new generations build lives in the United States and recent arrivals return frequently to Cuba to visit relatives, political change or not, the toast has become a vestige of the past.

"It's more of a prayer for freedom," said Marta Darby, who left Cuba at age 6 and still does the toast, albeit with a different meaning. "We're Americans. Our lives are here." In many ways, the toast's decline is emblematic of how the Cuban-American community has changed. Fewer and fewer Cubans today say they would return to live on the island even if a democratic government took power. In 2000, 22.6 percent of Cu-

bans said they were "very likely" to return, according to a poll conducted by Florida International University in Miami. Seven years later, that number was 15.6 percent.



Cuban food blogger Marta Darby poses for photos in her home in Mission Viejo, Calif. Darby will be making a toast to Cuba this year, accompanied with a glass of the rum-based eggnog known as the "creme de vie" or "cream of life."

(AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

The exiles' dreams of returning have been increasingly replaced with visions of building upon what they have established here.

"I think time is the major issue here, especially with older exiles, who are now basically rooted in Miami," said Jorge Duany, director of FIU's Cuban Research Institute.

The Cuban-American com-

munity has also become one of the most highly assimilated Hispanic groups in the United States. They have established their presence in business, politics and education. Cuban-Americans serve in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. A study by the Pew Hispanic Center found that Cubans are the Hispanic group most likely to say they have "only a little" or "almost nothing" in common with those living in their family's native country. At the same time, a large wave of Cuban migration in recent years has reshaped the Cuban-American community. In the last decade, about 30,000 Cubans have immigrated to the U.S. annually, the largest 10-year exodus since the start of the revolution. These Cubans have few reservations about traveling back to see relatives — unlike the earliest exiles, for whom returning was tantamount to a crime.

"It's hard to say, 'Next year in Cuba,' when it's, 'Next week in Havana,'" Pérez Firmat said. For Jorge Sacerio, a 47-year-old air conditioning technician who left Cuba in 2001, "Next year in Cuba" is literally next year in

Cuba. He will visit his father there in March.

He'd never heard of the toast in his 12 years in Miami. "I like it," he said at the Palacio de los Jugos, the "Juice Palace," a Miami chain serving Cuban staples like arroz con pollo and tropical fruit juices. "It sounds nice."

Still, there are some for whom the toast means just what it did when they first recited it decades ago.

"I do it every year," said Adys Mesa, 73, of Miami, who left in 1965. "And this year I will do it as well."

For her, the toast is a wish for change in Cuba so she can live there again.

"I dream every day," Mesa said as she nursed a cafe con leche with two friends. "I haven't forgotten."

At the same time, she acknowledges the Cuba of her memories has changed.

"It doesn't exist anymore," Mesa said flatly.

Darby will also be making the toast this year, accompanied with a glass of Cuban rum-based eggnog known as the "creme de vie" or "cream of life." But there is no illusion of returning for Darby, her children and her mother, now age 99. Darby's mother went to Cuba a couple of years ago to see her siblings and, "She went knowing that was pretty much their last hurrah."

For her children, ages 18 to 30, returning has "never been a reality for them."

"It's almost like we remember our family," Darby said of the toast. "We remember where our family came from."

Pérez Firmat, whose memoir is titled "Next Year in Cuba," said his Christmas Eve toast and celebration, an important part of Cuban holiday celebrations, has been replaced with just Christmas.

The memory of relatives and dreams lost, however, lives on, even if the toast does not.

"I just have my own private celebration," he said, "with my Cuban ghosts." □

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US Financial Front: High stakes for families losing jobless benefit

AMY TAXIN
CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
Associated Press
WESTMINSTER, California
(AP) — The end of unemployment benefit checks for more than a million people

(80 kilometers) east where a relative owns property so they can save on rent "We could let one of our cars go, but then you can't get to work — it's a never-ending cycle," 43-year-old

weeks of federal benefits — which are typically offered during periods of high unemployment — to the long-term jobless. While the Obama administration and Democrats in Congress want to continue the program, the extensions were dropped from a compromise budget deal struck earlier this month and Republican lawmakers have balked at its \$26 billion annual cost. The end of the program may prompt a drop in the nation's unemployment rate, but not necessarily for a good reason. People out of work are required to look for work to receive unemployment benefits. As benefits disappear, some

jobless will stop looking for work out of frustration and will no longer be counted as unemployed. The trend has already emerged in North Carolina, which started cutting off extended benefits in July. The state's unemployment rate went down — from 8.8 percent in June to 7.4 percent in November — even though the number of North Carolinians who said they had jobs rose only slightly in that time. The North Carolina evidence is consistent with the theory that ending benefits will cause some unemployed to drop out of the workforce, said Michael Feroli, an economist at JPMorgan Chase. □



Jimmetta Smith holds her resume while talking with a senior recruiter for Delta airlines at a job fair in Marietta, Ga. The end of unemployment benefit checks for more than a million people on Saturday is driving out-of-work Americans to consider selling cars, moving and taking minimum wage work after already slashing household budgets and pawning personal possessions to make ends meet.

(AP Photo/David Goldman)

ple on Saturday is driving out-of-work Americans to consider selling cars, moving and taking minimum wage work after already slashing household budgets and pawning personal possessions to make ends meet.

Greg and Barbara Chastain of Huntington Beach, California, put their two teenagers on the government-subsidized school lunch program and cut back on dining out after losing their T-shirt company in June following a dispute with an investor. They've exhausted their state unemployment benefits and now that the federal extensions are gone, unless they find jobs the couple plans to take their children out of their high school in January and relocate 50 miles

Greg Chastain said while accompanying his wife to an Orange County employment center. He said they eventually may try their luck in a less expensive state like Arizona or Texas if he can land a manufacturing job there.

The end to the five-year program that extended benefits for the long-term jobless affected 1.3 million people immediately and will impact hundreds of thousands more who remain jobless in the months ahead. Under the program, the federal government provided an average monthly stipend of \$1,166. Since 2008, the federal program paid out benefits to the unemployed after their 26 weeks of state benefits ran out. At its peak, the program offered up to 73

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Russia: 16 killed in train station suicide bombing

VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A suicide bomber struck a busy railway station in southern

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing in Volgograd, but it came several months after Chechen rebel lead-

sus, the center of an insurgency seeking an Islamist state in the region. Until recently Volgograd was not a typical target, but

Volgograd, which lies close to volatile Caucasus provinces, is 900 kilometers (550 miles) south of Moscow and about 650 kilometers (400 miles) northeast of Sochi, a Black Sea resort flanked by the North Caucasus Mountains.

The bombing highlights the daunting security challenge Russia will face in fulfilling its pledge to make the Sochi Games the "safest Olympics in history." The government has deployed tens of thousands of soldiers, police and other security personnel to protect the games.

Through the day, officials issued conflicting statements on casualties. They also said that the suspected bomber was a woman, but then reversed themselves and said the attacker could have been a man.

The Interfax news agency quoted unidentified law enforcement agents as saying that footage taken by surveillance cameras indicated that the bomber was a man. It also reported that it was further proven by a torn male finger ringed by a safety pin removed from a hand grenade, which was found on the site of the explosion.

The bomber detonated explosives in front of a metal detector just beyond the station's main entrance when a police sergeant became suspicious and rushed forward to check ID, officials said. The officer was killed by the blast, and several other policemen were wounded.

"When the suicide bomber saw a policeman near a metal detector, she became nervous and set off her explosive device," Vladimir Markin, the spokesman for the nation's top investigative agency, said in a statement earlier in the day. He added that the bomb contained about 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of TNT and was rigged with shrapnel.

Markin later told Interfax that the attacker could have been a man, but added that the investigation was still ongoing. He said that another hand grenade, which didn't explode, was also found on the explosion site.

Markin argued that security controls prevented a far greater number of casualties at the station, which was packed with people at a time when several trains were delayed. □



A police officer guards a main entrance to the Volgograd railway station hit by an explosion, in Volgograd, Russia, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013. More than a dozen people were killed and scores were wounded Sunday by a female suicide bomber at a railway station in southern Russia, officials said, heightening concern about terrorism ahead of February's Olympics in the Black Sea resort of Sochi.

(AP Photo)

Russia on Sunday, killing at least 15 other people and wounding scores more, officials said, in a stark reminder of the threat Russia is facing as it prepares to host February's Olympics in Sochi.

er Doku Umarov called for new attacks against civilian targets in Russia, including the Sochi Games. Suicide bombings have rocked Russia for years, but many have been contained to the North Cauca-

the city formerly known as Stalingrad has now been struck twice in two months — suggesting militants may be using the transportation hub as a renewed way of showing their reach outside their restive region.



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Syria likely to miss deadline for moving chemical weapons

NICK CUMMING-BRUCE

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GENEVA - Syria is likely to miss its year-end deadline for getting its most deadly chemical weapons out of the country despite an international effort to mobilize the resources needed to do so, according to the United Nations and the international monitoring group overseeing the program.

Syria has until mid-2014 to destroy its chemical weapons program under the deal struck by Russia and the United States in September. To meet that challenging timetable, it agreed with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to remove about 500 tons of its most toxic chemicals by the end of this year and the remaining roughly 700 tons of chemicals in its stockpile by early February.

"At this stage, transporta-

tion of the most critical chemical material before 31 December is unlikely," the United Nations and the chemical weapons group said in a joint statement released Saturday. They said that volatile security in Syria had "constrained planned movements" and that logistical problems and bad weather had contributed to the delay.

The OPCW had warned of possible delays when it approved the plan, and the statement noted the "important progress" Syria has made in dismantling its chemical weapons program in the past three months.

The plan the group agreed to earlier this month called for Syria to transport the "critical" chemicals, including some 20 tons of sulfur mustard and precursors for making sarin and VX nerve gas, from 12 storage sites to the port of Latakia. Danish

and Norwegian ships are to then transport them under naval escort to an Italian port for transfer to a U.S. vessel fitted with special

equipment for destroying them at sea.

Once movement of the chemicals gets underway the mission can be con-

ducted quite quickly, but it appears that Syria has not yet started transporting any chemicals, according to observers familiar with the mission, who spoke only on the condition they not be identified publicly because of the sensitivity of the issue. Syria now has "virtually all" of the logistical and security assets it needs to undertake the movement of its chemical weapons, Ahmet Uzumcu, head of the OPCW, said in a statement released after a meeting Friday. But transporting the chemicals by road to Latakia poses a particular challenge. Syrian government forces, which reportedly control the road from Damascus to the port, may still face the danger of rebel attacks. □



An undated handout photo taken by local activists in Damascus showing the remains of a rocket implicated in a chemical attack in August. A new analysis concludes the rockets were most likely fired by multiple launchers, with a range of about three kilometers.

(Handout via The New York Times)

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Israel names Palestinian prisoners to be released

JOSEF FEDERMAN
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel on Sunday announced the names of 26 long-serving Palestinian prisoners it will release this week under a U.S.-brokered formula to resume Mideast peace talks. All of the prisoners were convicted in connection to the killings of Israelis. The planned release, expected to take place late Monday, has angered many Israelis. Under heavy pressure from U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Israel and the Palestinians resumed peace talks in July. As a precondition, the Palestinians were forced to drop a demand for a halt in Israeli settlement construction in the

West Bank and east Jerusalem, captured areas they claim for a future state. In exchange, Israel agreed to release 104 of the longest-serving Palestinian prisoners it holds. This week's release will be the third of four planned phases. The Israeli government said the prisoners' crimes were committed before the beginning of the initial Israeli-Palestinians peace talks in 1993. All have served sentences of between 19 and 28 years. In the southern Gaza Strip, the family of Rami Barbakh anxiously awaited his return. Barbakh has been imprisoned in Israel for nearly 20 years after being convicted of murdering an Is-



Palestinian Hassiba Shehadeh, 67, holds a picture of her son Ahmed at her home at Qalandia refugee camp near the West Bank city of Ramallah, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013. Ahmed is one of the 26 Palestinian prisoners who were convicted in connection to the killing of Israelis, that Israel announced to release this week.

(AP Photo/Majdi Mohammed)

raeli man in 1994. Dancing in their family home in Khan Younis, Rami's parents handed out candies to well-wishers and prepared for a large family gathering upon his return. They put up posters of his picture and invited people to celebrate with them. Meanwhile, Israeli relatives of the victims protested the release. Meir Indor, head of Almagor, an association of families who have lost loved ones in militant attacks, accused the government of selling out the victims. "Maybe it will make happy the families of the murderers, but it is a sad day to the victims of terror in Israel," Indor said. "It is a message to murderers: You can kill a Jew and you can be released. You have the umbrella of Kerry." Kerry, who has been mediating the talks, is expected

back in the region this week to calm rising tensions. In response to the planned release, Israel has said it formally will approve plans to build some 1,400 settlement homes in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. The Palestinians have appealed to the U.S. to halt the planned construction. The Palestinians say continued settlement construction on the lands they claim for their future state is a sign of bad faith. In another move that could upset peace efforts, a committee of Israeli Cabinet ministers approved a bill Sunday that would annex a section of the West Bank near the Jordanian border to Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel must maintain a presence in the area, known as the Jordan Valley, as a security measure. □

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Saudi to give Lebanon \$3B to strengthen army

RYAN LUCAS

Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Saudi Arabia has pledged \$3 billion to Lebanon to help strengthen the country's armed forces and purchase weapons from France, Lebanon's president said Sunday, calling it the biggest grant ever for the nation's military. Michel Sleiman, who made the surprise announcement in a televised national address, did not provide any further details.

The Lebanese army has struggled to contain a rising tide of violence linked to the civil war in neighboring Syria, a conflict that has inflamed sectarian tensions in Lebanon and threatened the country's stability. "The Saudi king decided to give a generous, well-appreciated grant to Lebanon amounting to \$3 billion for the Lebanese army, which will allow it to buy new and modern weapons," Sleiman said. "The king pointed out that the weapons will be bought from France quickly, considering the historical relations that tie it to Lebanon and the military cooperation between the two countries."

Sleiman said he hoped Paris would quickly meet the initiative, and help the Lebanese army with arms, training and maintenance. French President Francois Hollande, who was in Ri-

yadh Sunday for talks with Saudi King Abdullah, said that France would help if requested to do so.

"If there are demands that are addressed to us, we will satisfy them," Hollande told reporters.

Fragile in the best of times, Lebanon is struggling to cope with the fallout from Syria's civil war.

That conflict has deeply divided Lebanon along confessional lines, and paralyzed the country's ramshackle political system to the point that it has been stuck with a weak and ineffectual caretaker government since April.

It has also seen a wave of deadly bombings and shootings that have fueled fears that Lebanon, which suffered a brutal 15-year civil war of its own that only ended in 1990, could be slowly slipping back toward full-blown sectarian conflict.

In a nod to those concerns, Sleiman said in his address that "Lebanon is threatened by sectarian conflict and extremism," and said that strengthening the army is a popular demand. The Lebanese army is generally seen as a unifying force in the country, and draws its ranks from all of Lebanon's sects. But it has struggled to contain the escalating violence in the country since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict. It is

also widely considered much weaker than the Shiite Hezbollah militant group, which is armed and funded by regional Shiite power and Saudi-rival Iran. The Saudi pledge ap-

peared aimed, at least in part, at boosting the military in relation to Hezbollah. Historically, the Lebanese army has been equipped by the United States and France.

Washington has provided hundreds of millions of dollars of military aid in recent years to Lebanon that has included armored vehicles, weapons and training for the Lebanese army. □



Lebanese President Michel Sleiman, right, meets with the U.N. humanitarian chief Valerie Amos, at the Presidential Palace in Baabda, east of Beirut. Lebanon's president has announced a \$3 billion grant from Saudi Arabia to help support and strengthen the Lebanese army. Sleiman says the funds will allow Lebanon's military to purchase French weapons.

(AP Photo/Dalati Nohra)

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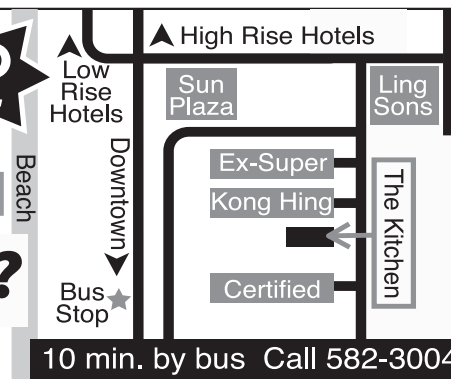
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Some 20,000 protest in Ukraine's capital Kiev

NATALIYA VASILYEVA

Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — About 20,000 people protested in Ukraine's capital on Sunday, maintaining more than a month of rallies opposing the government's decision to shelve a key deal with the European Union.

But the turnout on a clear, cold day was markedly lower than at previous rallies, which had attracted hundreds of thousands of people.

As it has before, Sunday's rally opened with speeches by the country's spiritual leaders, including Christian priests, a rabbi and a mufti who called for a national unity and stressed the protesters' right to have the government they want.

Oleh Tyahnybok, head of the opposition national party Svoboda notorious for his racist rhetoric, emphasized that Ukrainians in the west and the east should unite to fight for their rights.

"We are all Ukrainians and want our fair demands to be met," he said in his speech.

Most demonstrators in Kiev come from western and central regions, while many people in the mostly

Russian-speaking east and the south back closer ties with Moscow.

The demonstrations were sparked by President Viktor Yanukovich's decision last month to spike the EU

that protests will fizzle out. Yanukovich also has sought to assuage the protesters' anger by releasing some of the jailed opposition activists and suspending several top officials re-



Pro-European Union protesters stand face to face with riot police, who block their approach to the Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich's country residence of Mezhygiryia outside Kiev, Ukraine, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013. Thousands of protesters demanded Yanukovich's resignation over his decision to ditch a pact with the European Union in favor of closer ties with Russia. (AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky)

deal in favor of closer ties with Russia. The move angered many Ukrainians, who hoped that closer ties with the EU would help end centuries of Russia's domination.

The protests were galvanized by a brutal police crackdown on Nov. 30, but Yanukovich's government has since limited the use of force in an apparent hope

garding the crackdown, but thousands of demonstrators have maintained their vigil and the crowd has swelled over weekends.

After several attempts to clear the protesters by force drew condemnation from the West, the president now appears set on waiting them out.

Kiev's Independence

square, or the Maidan, was filled with wood fire smoke on Sunday coming from field kitchens and stoves that protesters installed in the tents they have been living at for weeks. The city's main street, Khreshchatyk, has been barricaded with wooden planks, sacks filled with snow, and car tires since November's crackdown.

At Sunday's rally, many of the demonstrators wore ribbons in the colors of the Ukrainian national flag and remained confident that their campaign will win.

Halina Kalymivska, 58, said the turnout could be lower than hoped because of the holiday season but that the underlying problems that sparked the protests have not gone away.

"It can't go on like this any longer. We want a normal life so that we can at least afford basic food," she said. "I don't think that people are disillusioned. Nothing has changed. People will keep on protesting, even after the holidays."

Opposition leaders continued to demand the Cabinet's resignation, but they have toned down demands for Yanukovich's ouster. □

5 decapitated bodies found in west Mexico

MORELIA, Mexico (AP) —

Prosecutors found five decapitated bodies in western Mexico Saturday, with a hand-lettered sign linking the killings to a drug cartel. The bodies were found in two different locations on the outskirts of Morelia, the state capital of Michoacan. At one spot, the bodies of three of the men were found lying against the curb of a traffic circle. The state attorney general's office said their heads had been cut off and placed next to the bodies. A little later Saturday, the bodies of two other men were found in another community on the outskirts of Morelia. Both had been decapitated, and the heads were placed a little farther away. A bloody kitchen knife was found on a nearby road. Michoacan has been the scene of bloody turf battles between the Caballeros Templarios cartel and the Jalisco New Generation cartel, known by its initials in Spanish as "CJNG." A hand-lettered sign left with some of the bodies read "We are here now ... respectfully, CJNG." While Morelia has been quieter than other parts of Michoacan, violence has recently surged there. On Dec. 23, the assistant mayor of one of the suburbs of Morelia was found shot to death in his car. And in September, four men hacked a state legislator to death with machetes on a road near the capital. The Jalisco gang has been moving into Michoacan, displacing the pseudo-religious Knights Templar cartel, which earned the enmity of many inhabitants because of its systematic extortion demands on businesses and residents. □

North Sea crossing aborted after suspected arson

LONDON (AP) — A ferry bound for Amsterdam was forced to return to England Sunday following a fire which sent passengers to the outer deck in the middle of the night and prompted rescue services to scramble lifeboats and helicopters.

The ferry, carrying 946 passengers to Holland, had sailed just 30 miles (50 kilometers) in the North Sea when the fire broke out at

about 11 p.m. Saturday. It was quickly contained, but two crew members and four passengers were taken off the ferry for treatment for smoke inhalation before it returned to Newcastle, in northern England. Twenty-three other people were treated on board for smoke-related injuries.

Local police said a 26-year-old passenger has been arrested on suspicion of starting the blaze. Another, 28,

has been arrested on suspicion of fighting. Neither man was named, in line with British practice.

The circumstances surrounding the fire — which started in one of the ship's cabins — remain unexplained, although the evacuation of passengers to the outer deck of the ship was generally described as calm. One eyewitness told the BBC some passengers jokingly began singing the

theme song from "Titanic." Another passenger, 28-year-old Steven Basford, said people were mostly well-behaved, although he said two men got into a fight.

"Obviously people had had a lot to drink," Basford said. "It's a bit of a party boat."

The boat is due to remain in dock for another day while authorities inspect the damage. □



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at zero and everyone will run across the beach into the balmy water. No freezing temperatures, shivering bodies or chattering teeth hurting from the cold here: this is your chance to join and boast about it afterwards. Join the fun and the thousands upon thousands others who are doing the same all over the world,



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This fourth MooMba Unox Nieuwjaarsduik has an



added benefit: not only do you get rid of any hangover you might have from partying till early morning on the 31st, you get a bowl of 'erwtensop' (pea soup) with sausage afterwards. This Dutch traditional pea soup will heat you up after your plunge and it will have you in terrific shape for more partying in no time flat.

The schedule for the upcoming Nieuwjaarsduik on January 1st is as follows: from 10:30 until 12:30 there

is a live transmission from Cool FM's Rico Rijk, one of Aruba's most popular radio hosts. Starting at 11, a Zumba class will warm up the muscles until 11:40. Instructor is Aruba's Miss Bikini 2013, Sharon Puy, and she is known to teach a mean, spirited class. At noon, 12 o'clock sharp, the signal for the plunge is given and swimmers will be racing off towards the ocean seeking eternal fame. A very Happy New Year, everybody! □



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Joey and Steffie from Holland having a blast on Aruba!

PALM BEACH - Joey and Steffie are looking ridiculously happy during their dinner at Fishes & More Restaurant in s Arawak Gardens. The two are both from Holland and are enjoying their holiday to the hilt. They heard about Fishes & More, one of the most popular restaurants on the island, when they were relaxing at nearby MooMba Beach. As Fishes & More also belongs to the Aruba Wine and Dine chain, they decided to try out one of the terrific Arawak Garden restaurants. For Steffie, who is a first-time visitor, and Joey, who has been to the island five times already, the experience will soon be repeated.

Fishes & More is shimmering with Christmas lights these days, the perfect ingredient for a romantic dinner; together with the live music, your evening can't go wrong as Joey and Steffie can testify! □



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Serena Williams of the U.S. speaks during a press conference ahead of the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane, Australia, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013.

Associated Press

Sharapova, Serena Williams mean business in Brisbane

JOHN PYE

AP Sports Writer

BRISBANE, Australia (AP)

— After pulling out of the Brisbane International with injuries in recent seasons, Maria Sharapova is aiming to use the season-opening tournament this time as a springboard for her comeback and to see how her new support crew works in competition.

Sharapova has only played one match since an early exit at Wimbledon due to a right shoulder injury and has spent months working with her new coach Sven Groeneveld. She arrived in Australia to prepare for the first major of the season with her boyfriend and fellow professional Grigor Dimitrov, who returns after losing the final here to Andy Murray last season.

Serena Williams won the last Brisbane title and is back to defend it, hoping she hasn't lost any of the momentum from a stunning 2013 season when she won 11 titles including the French and U.S. Opens, had 78 wins from 82 matches — including a 34-match winning streak —

Continued on page 22



UNBEARABLE

Green Bay sends Bears packin'

Chicago Bears wide receiver Brandon Marshall (15) walks off the field after the Bears' 33-28 loss to the Green Bay Packers in an NFL football game on Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013, in Chicago.

Associated Press
NFL Roundup Page 20

Former F1 driver Schumacher in critical condition

GEIR MOULSON
SARAH DiLORENZO
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Seven-time Formula One champion Michael Schumacher was in critical condition after undergoing brain surgery following a skiing accident in the French Alps on Sunday, doctors said.

The Grenoble University Hospital Center said the retired racing driver arrived at the clinic in a coma and underwent immediate surgery for a serious head trauma.

It was not clear whether the 44-year-old Schumacher was still in a coma but the hospital statement, which was signed by a neurosurgeon, an anesthesiologist and Marc Penaud, the hospital's deputy director, said "he remains in a critical condition."

Schumacher fell while skiing off-piste in Meribel earlier Sunday and hit his head on a rock, according to a

statement from the resort. Resort managers said he had been wearing a helmet and was conscious when rescuers first responded to the scene.

Earlier in the day, the Meribel resort said Schumacher had been taken to Grenoble for tests and authorities said his life was not in danger.

But the situation began to appear more serious when the resort said that orthopedic and trauma surgeon Gerard Saillant had traveled from Paris to the hospital in Grenoble to examine Schumacher. German news agency dpa said it was Saillant who operated on Schumacher when he broke his leg during a crash at the Silverstone race course in 1999.

In an email to The Associated Press, Schumacher's manager Sabine Kehm said the champion German driver was on a private skiing trip and "fell on

his head."

"We ask for understanding that we cannot give running updates on his condition. He wore a helmet and was not alone," Kehm said. Schumacher's 14-year-old son was skiing with his father when the accident happened, the resort said. As news of the accident spread, Formula One drivers used social media to wish Schumacher a quick recovery.

His former Ferrari teammate Felipe Massa, who recovered from life-threatening injuries sustained at the Hungarian Grand Prix in 2009, wrote on Instagram: "I am praying for you my brother!! I hope you have a quick recovery!! God bless you Michael."

The Twitter feed of Germany's Adrian Sutil, who drives for Sauber, read: "I hope Michael Schumacher will get well soon! All my best to him and his family." Romain Grosjean of Lotus tweeted:



Michael Schumacher poses for the photographers at the Silverstone circuit in England, in this Saturday, July 7, 2012 file photo.
Associated Press

"All our thoughts to Schumi and his family! Hope you will recover soon #legend #Schumi."

In addition to the crash at Silverstone, Schumacher was hurt seriously in a motorcycling accident in February 2009 in Spain when

he suffered neck and spine injuries. He recovered sufficiently from those injuries to make a comeback in F1. Schumacher initially retired from F1 in 2006 after winning five straight titles with Ferrari following two earlier ones with Benetton. □

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New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady kicks a 32-yard punt on third down during the third quarter of an NFL football game against the Buffalo Bills, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013, in Foxborough, Mass. The Patriots won 34-20, and will have a first-round bye in the AFC playoffs.
Associated Press

NFL Capsules

Rodgers, Cobb lead Packers over Bears, 33-28

The Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Aaron Rodgers fired a 48-yard touchdown pass to Randall Cobb in the final minute, and the Green Bay Packers beat the Chicago Bears 33-28 to capture the NFC North championship. Back after missing seven games with a broken left collarbone, Rodgers found a wide open Cobb on fourth-and-8 at the 48 to wipe out a one-point deficit with 38 seconds left. Green Bay will host San Francisco in the playoffs next weekend.

The Bears had one final drive, but Jay Cutler's deep pass to Alshon Jeffery was intercepted by Sam Shields on the final play.

That gave the Packers (8-7-1) their third straight division title and fifth postseason appearance in a row. It also kept the Bears (8-8) out of the playoffs for the sixth time in seven years.

BENGALS 34, RAVENS 17 CINCINNATI (AP) — Andy Dalton threw for two touchdowns, ran for another and set a pair of Bengals passing records, leading Cincinnati to a victory that eliminated the defending Super Bowl champion Baltimore Ravens.

It was an erratic performance by the third-year quarterback, who also threw four interceptions for AFC North winner Cincinnati (11-5).

The Ravens (8-8) lost their last two games, denying them a chance to make the playoffs for a sixth straight season. They couldn't avoid the Super Bowl slump that's so common. The Ravens became the 15th Super Bowl champ that failed to reach the playoffs the following season, and the sixth in the last 12 years.

In Cincinnati, there's only one thing in mind: finally win a playoff game. The Bengals haven't done that since the 1990 season. They lost opening-round games in Houston each of the last two seasons as wild cards. **BRONCOS 34, RAIDERS 14 OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)** — Peyton Manning set the NFL single-season record for yards passing and threw four first-half touchdown passes to help the Denver Broncos clinch the top seed in the AFC playoffs with a win over the Oak-

land Raiders.

Manning needed just one half to add the yards record to the touchdown mark he set last week and assure that the Broncos (13-3) won't have to leave home again until the Super Bowl if they make it that far. He threw touchdown passes to Eric Decker and Knowshon Moreno in the first quarter and added two to Demaryius Thomas in the second quarter. He broke Drew Brees' record of 5,476 yards set in 2011 with a 5-yard pass to Thomas with 13 seconds left in the half to make it 31-0.

That ended Manning's day having completed 25 of 28 passes for 266 yards. He finished the season with 5,477 yards and 55 touchdown passes.

The Raiders (4-12) ended their 11th straight non-winning season with six straight losses and big questions about the future of second-year coach Dennis Allen.

SAINTS 42, BUCCANEERS 17 NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Drew Brees passed for four touchdowns and ran for another score, and New Orleans clinched a wild-card spot with a victory over Tampa Bay.

Three of Brees' scoring strikes were longer than 40 yards — 76 to Kenny Stills, 44 to Lance Moore and 41 to Robert Meachem. Brees passed for 381 yards, eclipsing 5,000 yards in a season for an unprecedented fourth time. He finished the season with 5,162 yards to go with 39 touchdowns. Brees' other TD was a 10-yard pass to tight end Jimmy Graham, and the Saints (11-5) finished 8-0 in the Superdome.

Continued on next page



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Continued from page 20

Mike Glennon passed for 219 yards and two TDs for Tampa Bay (4-12). With doubts swirling about the future of second-year Tampa Bay coach Greg Schiano, the Bucs closed the season with losses in their last three games, and four of their last five.

CHARGERS 27, CHIEFS 24, OT

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Nick Novak kicked a 36-yard field goal with 5:30 left in overtime, ending the San Diego Chargers' three-year playoff drought with a victory over the Kansas City Chiefs.

The Chargers (9-7) needed help for weeks, and everything fell into place on Sunday, with the last piece being their win over a Chiefs team that already had clinched the AFC's No. 5 seed and rested 20 of 22 starters.

The Chargers, who trailed by 10 points in the fourth quarter, held the Chiefs on downs to win it after they reached the San Diego 41. Earlier in the day, the Chargers got the help they needed when Miami and Baltimore both lost. San Diego has won four straight and five of six heading into a wild-card game next weekend at AFC North champion Cincinnati.

The Chiefs (11-5) go into the playoffs having lost five of seven. They play at AFC South champion Indianapolis.

SEAHAWKS 27, RAMS 9

SEATTLE (AP) — Malcolm Smith returned an interception 37 yards for a touchdown, Marshawn Lynch added a 2-yard scoring run and the Seahawks clinched the NFC West title and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs with a win over the St. Louis Rams.

Seattle (13-3) matched the franchise record for

wins in a season and finally wrapped up the No. 1 seed after losses to San Francisco and last week to Arizona, which snapped a 14-game home winning streak.

Russell Wilson finished 15 of 23 for 172 yards. Seattle capped the victory with a 47-yard touchdown pass from Wilson to Golden Tate early in the fourth quarter that lacked the unsportsmanlike wave that got Tate flagged on a similar TD reception in St. Louis earlier this season.

The Rams (7-9) were penalized a season-high 12 times for 87 yards. Kellen Clemens finished 21 of 30 for 157 yards and two interceptions. Zac Stacy, who needed 42 yards rushing to reach 1,000 on the season, was held to 15 yards on 15 carries.

JETS 20, DOLPHINS 7

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — The Dolphins were eliminated from the scramble for the AFC's final wild-card berth by the Jets, who thrived in the role of spoilers against their archrivals. Then owner Woody Johnson said coach Rex Ryan would return despite the Jets (8-8) sitting out the postseason themselves for the third year in a row.

Geno Smith led three long scoring drives, ran for a touchdown and threw for 190 yards, while two interceptions by rookie Dee Milliner and one by 35-year-old Ed Reed prevented a Miami comeback.

The Dolphins (8-8) squandered a shot at their first playoff berth since 2008 by losing their final two games. It was a dismal end to a roller-coaster season that included a four-game losing streak and a bullying scandal that drew national scrutiny.

STEELERS 20, BROWNS 7

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Le'Veon Bell ran for 90 yards and a touchdown as

the Steelers drubbed the Cleveland Browns, though Pittsburgh's bid to become the second team in NFL history to go winless in September and make the playoffs ended when San Diego edged Kansas City. Ben Roethlisberger passed for 179 yards and a touchdown against two interceptions as the Steelers (8-8) won their third straight to avoid the franchise's first losing season since 2003. The victory also continued a furious second-half rally by the Steelers, who went 6-2 over the season's final eight weeks to fuel an improbable run at the AFC's final postseason spot. Jason Campbell completed 23 of 40 passes for 240 yards with a touchdown, but the Browns (4-12) lost their seventh straight, fueling speculation first-year coach Rob Chudzinski's



Tampa Bay Buccaneers cornerback Darrelle Revis (24) tries to break up a touchdown reception by New Orleans Saints wide receiver Robert Meachem (17) in the first half of an NFL football game in New Orleans, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013.

Associated Press

job could be in jeopardy. PANTHERS 21, FALCONS 20 ATLANTA (AP) — Cam Newton threw two touchdown

passes, Greg Hardy had a team-record four sacks and the Panthers clinched the NFC South. □

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Weidman defends UFC belt when Silva injures leg

GREG BEACHAM

AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Chris Weidman defended his UFC middleweight title when Anderson Silva apparently broke his left leg on a kick in the second round, ending UFC 168 with a horrific injury Saturday night. Weidman (11-0) quietly celebrated his victory while medical personnel tended to Silva (33-6), whose left shin bent grotesquely while landing a kick on Weidman's left leg 1:16 into the round.

Weidman, who earned his belt with an upset victory over the long-reigning champion in July, also dominated the first round of the rematch. "I did work on checking kicks," Weidman said. "I figured if I (caught) him on my knee, it could really hurt him. Crazy how this happened."

Ronda Rousey retained her bantamweight title in the UFC's year-end event,



Anderson Silva, right, of Brazil, screams after kicking Chris Weidman of Baldwin, N.Y., and injuring his foot during the UFC 168 mixed martial arts middleweight championship bout on Saturday, Dec. 28, 2013, in Las Vegas.

submitting Miesha Tate with a third-round arm bar. Rousey then walked away from her bitter rival's offer of a post-fight handshake, earning ferocious boos from the MGM Grand Garden crowd.

Silva's injury cast a pall over arguably the UFC's biggest fight card of the year, re-

minding every fan of the rapidly growing sport of the brutality frequently at its core. Although the injury happened too quickly to be seen by most naked eyes in Las Vegas, thousands of fans cringed audibly when the replay was shown once on the arena's big screens.

Silva left the octagon with a brace on his leg. Weidman paid tribute to the injured ex-champion, calling him the greatest fighter in the sport's history.

Silva's nearly seven-year reign atop the middleweight division ended nearly six months ago when Weidman stopped the

champion with a left hook at UFC 162.

Thousands of Brazilian fans — including retired soccer star Ronaldo — chanted, sang and waved flags for Silva and several Brazilian undercard fighters, creating a semblance of the huge home-cage advantage enjoyed by their fighters back home.

Before the unsettling main event, Rousey (8-0) got the biggest test of her ascendant career.

Rousey had never seen the second round of a mixed martial arts fight after seven straight first-round wins, but Tate tested the champion with striking and tenacity. Although Rousey repeatedly tossed Tate (13-5) to the canvas and pounded on her, Rousey couldn't finish until getting a weary opponent into her patented arm bar — the submission move she has used to end each of her eight professional fights. □

Associated Press

Sharapova

Continued from page 18

lected more than \$12 million in prize money.

Her brief offseason was not exactly business as usual — although it was commercial.

She trained in Florida with her father, Richard, so she could be close to home for the relaunch of one of her companies and to hire a CEO for it.

"I was interviewing so many people. Corporate Serena was taking over," she told a news conference Sunday. "I'm happy to be here right now."

Corporate Serena conducted at least 10 interviews, and still has at least one more to do. She expects it to be a tough interview, like they all are.

"I definitely am not easy ... I'm a tough interviewer. For me, it's all about business and removing a lot of emotion," she said. "I just want to get to the point." And that brings her back to tennis, where she can turn the corporate email ac-



Maria Sharapova of Russia speaks during a press conference before the start of the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane, Australia, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013.

Associated Press

count off for a while and concentrate on what she does best.

"I took a couple weeks off, but I was already itching to get back on the court," she said. "I didn't want to lose any rhythm or anything. Didn't want to lose momentum."

No. 3-seeded Sharapova is in Williams' half of the draw, meaning they could meet in the semifinals.

The Brisbane tournament

will be Sharapova's only warmup for the Australian Open, which starts Jan. 13, so she needs to find her rhythm quickly. She said she'd been practicing hard, but also concentrating on relaxing when she's off the court. Traveling with Dimitrov has helped, she said, despite or because of their major common interest.

"Of course we share a lot of the same things just because we have an elephant in the room that's called tennis," Sharapova said Sunday. "But there are so many other things to life that are besides tennis, and there are a lot more things to discuss than forehands and backhands and strings and rackets, which we share similar ideas and things of."

Sharapova split with coach Thomas Hogstedt after her Wimbledon loss, and said she wasn't in the right frame of mind to work with Jimmy Connors long term — that partnership lasted one match.

"You have to realize that the decisions you make,

you have to make them selfishly in this business to be better, to know what's right for you," she said. "From the first time we met I really liked what (Groeneveld) had to say. He's a team player. He works with everyone on my team, something I was missing for a little bit of time."

In first-round results at Brisbane: Wimbledon finalist Sabine Lisicki had a 6-3, 6-4 win over Magdalena Rybarikova of Slovakia; Andrea Petkovic of Germany beat American Bethanie Mattek-Sands 6-4, 7-5; Japanese veteran Kimiko Date-Krumm won 6-3, 7-5 over Australia's Olivia Rogowska; and Swiss player Stefanie Vogele beat American Madison Keys 6-4, 6-3. Former No. 1-ranked Caroline Wozniacki withdrew after hurting her right shoulder in practice but said she expected to be fit for the Sydney International next week.

While Serena Williams gets a first-round bye in Brisbane, her older sister Venus Williams will be in action from the first round at

the WTA event in Auckland on Monday when she plays 134-ranked Andrea Hlavackova of the Czech Republic.

In Hopman Cup Group B action at Perth, Petra Kvitova and Radek Stepanek combined to give the Czech Republic a 3-0 win over Spain.

Kvitova only lost one game en route to a comprehensive singles win over Anabel Medina Garrigues before Stepanek beat Daniel Munoz-De La Nava 6-2, 6-2. The Czech pair won the mixed doubles 6-3, 6-4.

In evening play in Group A, Grzegorz Panfil upset No. 11-ranked Milos Raonic 7-6, 6-3 to give Poland an unlikely 2-0 victory over Canada. Agnieszka Radwanska gave the Poles a hard-fought 1-0 lead with a 6-3, 6-7, 6-2 win over Eugenie Bouchard. □



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College Roundup

'Canes endure 36-9 Russell Bowl rout by Louisville

The Associated Press

ORLANDO, Florida (AP) —

Teddy Bridgewater threw three touchdown passes and ran for another score in No. 18 Louisville's 36-9 victory over Miami on Saturday night in the Russell Athletic Bowl.

The Cardinals (12-1) spotted Miami (9-4) an early 2-0 lead, then dominated the rest of the way, racking up 554 total yards to the Hurricanes' 174. Bridgewater was 35 for 45 for career-high 447 yards. DeVante Parker had nine catches for 142 yards and a touchdown.

Louisville won its second straight bowl game for its second 12-win season.

With Cardinals' fans chanting "Teddy! Teddy!" at times throughout the game Bridgewater, projected to be a top NFL draft pick if he comes out this summer, set a school season record with 31 touchdown passes. The Miami native also tied the school record with his 27th victory as Louisville's starter.

Miami, playing in its first bowl game since 2010, hasn't had a bowl victory since 2006, losing four straight. The Hurricanes were returning to the post-season following a two-year, self-imposed ban during an NCAA investigation. BUFFALO WILD WINGS BOWL KANSAS ST. 31, MICHIGAN 14

At Tempe, Arizona, Jake Waters threw for 271 yards and connected with Tyler Lockett on three touchdowns, leading Kansas State past Michigan in the Buffalo Wild Wings Bowl for its first bowl victory in 11

years.

Kansas State (8-5) scored on its first three possessions, all touchdown passes from Waters to Lockett, and its defense dominated Michigan to end a five-game bowl losing streak.

Lockett set a school record with 10 catches for 116 yards and Waters completed 21 of 27 passes, sending the Wildcats to their first bowl victory since the 2002 Holiday Bowl.

Freshman Shane Morris was steady in place of injured starter Devin Gardner, leading Michigan (7-6) on two early scoring drives. The Wolverines settled for field goals on both and did little the rest of the way, finishing with 261 total yards.

Morris threw for 196 yards on 24-of-38 passing with an interception before leading Michigan on a late scoring drive with the game out of reach. Michigan's defense also had trouble stopping Kansas State most of the night, giving up 420 total yards.

Kansas State finished the season strong after some early difficulties — starting with a home loss to FCS North Dakota State — winning five of its final six games while scoring at least 31 points in each.

PINSTRIP BOWL

NO. 25 NOTRE DAME 29, RUTGERS 16

At New York, Tommy Rees passed for 319 yards in his final college game, Kyle Brindza kicked five field goals and Notre Dame muddled through victory over Rutgers in the Pinstripe Bowl. The Fighting Irish (9-4) finished their follow-up season to last year's run to the national championship

game a long way from the BCS against a two-touchdown underdog trying to avoid a losing record.

Notre Dame's TJ Jones scored on an 8-yard run in the first quarter and Rutgers star Brandon Coleman answered with a 14-yard touchdown catch soon after. Tarean Folston's 3-yard touchdown run with 3:38 in the fourth made it 26-16 and finally gave the Irish a comfortable lead.

On the slick, cold turf at Yankee Stadium, the Pinstripe Bowl turned into a field-goal kicking contest. Brindza was 5 for 6. Kyle Federico made 3 of 3 for the Scarlet Knights (6-7).

Rees was 27 of 47.

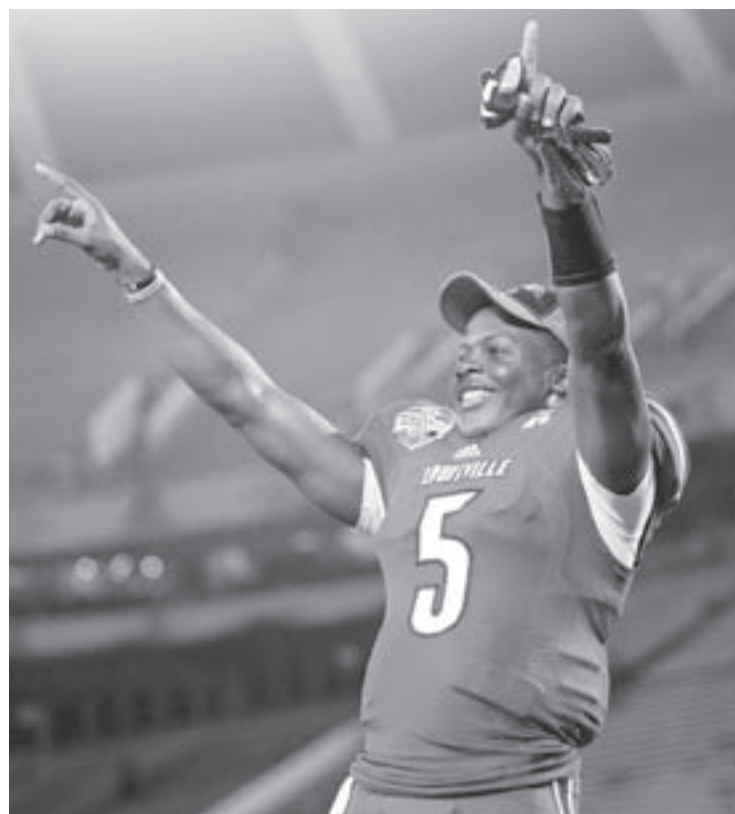
BELK BOWL

NORTH CAROLINA 39, CINCINNATI 17

At Charlotte, North Carolina, T.J. Logan returned a kickoff 78 yards for a touchdown, and Ryan Switzer scored on an 86-yard punt return to help North Carolina beat Cincinnati for its first Belk Bowl victory in four attempts.

Marquise Williams threw for 171 yards and a touchdown for the Tar Heels (7-6) in their first bowl victory since 2010. Romar Morris scored on two short touchdown runs, and Jack Tabb caught a touchdown pass as the Tar Heels closed the season by winning six of their final seven games.

Cincinnati (9-4) was looking to become the bowl's first back-to-back champion since Virginia did it 10 years ago, but last year's MVP Brandon Kay was limited to 181 yards passing and no touchdowns. The Tar Heels had five sacks, including one for a safety. □



Louisville quarterback Teddy Bridgewater points to cheering fans after Louisville defeated Miami 36-9 in the Russell Athletic Bowl NCAA college football game in Orlando, Fla., Saturday, Dec. 28, 2013.

Associated Press

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Regulators reviewing Volcker rule provision

MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN
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Federal regulators this weekend once again tried to quiet the controversy about the potential impact of a provision of the Volcker Rule on hundreds of community banks.

The regulators, facing a lawsuit from a banking trade group, said they were reviewing whether the new regulation required community banks to rid themselves of an obscure and complex security and, in the process, take an immediate hit to their capital levels. The regulators said they expected to decide by Jan. 15.

The statement is the latest attempt by regulators to address concerns from community bankers about the Volcker Rule's effect on collateralized debt obligations backed by trust-preferred securities, a type of security that many small banks invested in before the financial crisis.

A person briefed on the matter said the joint statement from four regulatory agencies, including the Federal Reserve and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., is intended to assure banks and their auditors that the Volcker Rule could be amended to permit small lenders to continue holding the securities, known as TruPs CDOs.

If small banks were permitted to continue holding the securities until they recovered in value, the lenders would not be forced to take write-downs and a corresponding hit to their capital levels.

That would constitute a small but important victory for the banking industry, which has been lobbying to reshape or water down the Volcker Rule. It

could also give the banks a foothold as they fight the regulatory agencies over parts of the rule, which was initially intended to stop banks from speculatively trading with their depositors' money.

The Volcker Rule took nearly three years to draft before it was approved by regulators this month.

The statement from the regulators comes days after the American Bankers Association, an industry

filing of additional papers in the lawsuit until Jan. 17. The request would effectively postpone a ruling that had been expected next week until the middle of January at the earliest.

In the lawsuit, the group said 275 small banks would sustain an imminent \$600 million hit to capital, making them less likely to lend to consumers and businesses. It also said bank auditors might require the banks to rid themselves

interim relief from this action."

The provision came into the spotlight after Zions Bancorporation, a regional lender based in Salt Lake City, said Dec. 16 that it was taking a fourth-quarter charge of \$387 million to write down the value of its portfolio of the securities and was also reducing its regulatory capital levels after changing its accounting treatment for those securities.



Paul Volcker, economist and former chairman of the Federal Reserve, at his office in New York. Federal regulators this weekend once again tried to quiet the controversy about the potential impact of a provision of the Volcker Rule on hundreds of community banks.

(Robert Caplin/The New York Times)

trade group, filed a motion in federal court in Washington seeking to quickly suspend the provision of the Volcker Rule that would appear to force small banks to sell the securities. In a sign that the trade group and regulators were trying to reach an agreement, the parties filed a late-night motion with the court that would delay the

of the specialized CDOs if the provision was kept in place.

Frank Keating, president and chief executive of the American Bankers Association, said in a statement that the group "appreciates the regulators taking this important step, and our experts are studying to see if the affected banks indeed find immediate

It is not clear if any permanent exemption over the provision would apply to Zions, which has about \$55 billion in consolidated assets. The typical community bank has less than \$15 billion in assets, people briefed on the matter said. A Zions spokesman declined to comment on the latest statement from regulators.

The Week Ahead: BUSINESS BRIEFS

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE
On Tuesday, the Conference Board will release its monthly survey of consumer confidence in the United States for December. The sentiment gauge fell to a seven-month low of 70.4 in November, in the aftermath of October's government shutdown and the troubled launch of the Affordable Care Act, but many economists expect the outlook to rebound this month. Besides the soaring stock market, the labor market has been showing signs of life with unemployment levels easing slightly, along with improved indicators for economic growth recently.

LATVIA JOINS EUROZONE

The Baltic nation of Latvia officially becomes the 18th member of the eurozone Wednesday. Latvians will be able to make purchases with the euro, or the eiro as it is known in Latvian, as well as with the national currency, the lats, until Jan. 15. On that day the euro will become the country's sole legal tender, though citizens can exchange lats for euros at the Latvian central bank indefinitely. Latvia is the first new member of the eurozone since Estonia joined in 2011.

BOEING VOTE

Boeing workers in the Puget Sound area of Washington state vote Friday on whether to approve an eight-year contract extension. Boeing says it will commit to locating assembly of its new 777X jet and fabricating the composite wing in the area if the workers, members of the machinists' union, vote yes. That means Boeing would add more than 10,000 jobs there. The parent machinists' union ordered the vote despite a 2-1 rejection of a similar deal in November.

DETROIT BANKRUPTCY

Detroit and its creditors will be in bankruptcy court Friday to discuss revised plans to end several costly interest-rate swaps. Detroit's counterparties, Bank of America and UBS, □

Bundesbank chief presses EU to pursue reforms

BERLIN (AP) — Germany's central bank president is pressing struggling European countries to keep pursuing economic reforms and voicing concern that ultra-low interest rates could in the long term lighten pressure on politicians to stay

the course. Bundesbank chief and European Central Bank governing council member Jens Weidmann was quoted as telling Saturday's edition of German daily Bild that financial markets have calmed but "the crisis can flare up again."

He said Europe needs "endurance and strong will" to see through its reform course.

The ECB has cut its main interest rate to a record-low 0.25 percent and may take further action amid economic weakness and low

inflation.

Weidmann, an anti-inflation hawk, said low rates are justified but cautioned that "low price pressure cannot be a warrant for loosening monetary policy at will." □



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SmartMoney:

Gleaning Clues For A Forecast Of The Year Ahead

PAUL SULLIVAN

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This is the time of year when investment analysts predict what they believe will happen over the next 12 months.

That they are invariably wrong about something is a given. Or, to be more charitable, it is a given that events that no one could have foreseen will have caused their deeply researched predictions to be incorrect.

Consider the sustained increase in U.S. stock prices this year. Many predicted that the Standard & Poor's 500-stock index would have a good year, but no one predicted it would rise 29 percent.

And already one prediction that every strategist I talked to made for next year is wrong: that the Federal Reserve would curb its bond-buying program in March or later, if the economy remained weak.

On Dec. 18, the Fed announced that it would buy \$10 billion less in bonds a month starting in January.

After the announcement, Gary Thayer, chief macro strategist at Wells Fargo, pointed out in a note to clients that the unemployment rate at 7 percent was about 1 percentage point lower than when the Fed started this round of bond buying.

Clearly, he and some of the other strategists who watch these things did not think a 7 percent unemployment rate was all that good, but the Fed disagreed.

It's easy to pick on strategists for what turn out to be miscalculations, but it's not terribly productive. If clients did not want one-year predictions, Wall Street would probably stop providing

them. And the timing, in the case of tapering, may not matter since it signaled that the economy is doing better.

So this year I wanted to do something more than just look at the year ahead and argue the pros and cons of various predictions. After asking what people

will continue. But unlike this year, that rise is likely to be more uneven.

Barbara Reinhard, chief investment officer for the Americas at Credit Suisse, said: "Global growth is going to be better in 2014 than 2013."

In the United States, she said, the drag of the se-

lack of large dips compared with previous years.

"Investors haven't experienced a truly volatile market in quite some time," she said.

"Volatility is normal, but we're riding below normal. So to get us back to normal may feel like a real increase in volatility to people."

few years, the view is they will begin to rise as the Fed ends its bond-buying program and the economy improves.

As that happens, the value of bonds that people own decreases.

Expecting such a situation, the prevailing wisdom is not to buy bonds or to buy bonds with shorter maturities, say under five years, which will lose less of their value. But thinking in binary terms like this has risks.

"We either love or hate an asset class and go all in or all out," said Mike Ryan, chief investment strategist at UBS Wealth Management Americas.

"I don't know what is going to go wrong in 2014, but I know something will. Every allocation has to take into account that there will be stresses, and bonds are a counterweight to that."

Municipal bonds are their own area of worry. Hugh McGuirk, vice president and head of municipal bonds at T.

Rowe Price, said the market this year was down about 2.5 percent and he did not have high expectations for a positive return in 2014.

"The best-case scenario for municipal bonds is the economy doesn't grow like people think and the effects of coming out of the recession peters out and maybe rates don't move at all," he said.

In that instance - which would be awful for anyone who was not a municipal bond investor - he foresaw returns from a positive 3 to 4 percent to a negative 2 to 3 percent.

If there is an upside, he said it would be in municipal bonds tied to essential services like water and sewer rates. □



Mike Ryan, chief investment strategist at UBS Wealth Management Americas, at his office in Melville, N.Y., Dec. 26, 2013. Ryan said he doesn't know what will go wrong in 2014, but something will, a prediction that counters investors who forecast global growth next year.

(John Marshall Mantel/The New York Times)

were predicting, I wanted to know why we still bother with these predictions. If the last decade has taught us anything, it is that unexpected events can knock our portfolios for a loop.

Next week, I'll look at views on what is likely to happen during the next three to five years and ask why there has not been more of a push for longer predictions. Up first, the year-ahead game.

CONSENSUS VIEWS

The U.S. stock market has had a remarkable run this year, and the view is that it

quester cuts would disappear, and Europe was expected to move into modest growth. Stocks, on a historical basis, are not expensive, and investors have been slow to put money back into equities, so there is reason to think they could continue to go higher.

"This doesn't mean we aren't in for some sort of pullback," she said. "We should experience a 5 to 7 percent pullback at some point."

Katherine Nixon, chief investment officer at Northern Trust, said an anomaly of this year's rally was the

Her concern is that when normal volatility returns in the United States, investors could get spooked.

Next year is also predicted to be one in which Europe may begin to do better, and that means European companies, beyond financial institutions that rebounded broadly this year, are expected to do well.

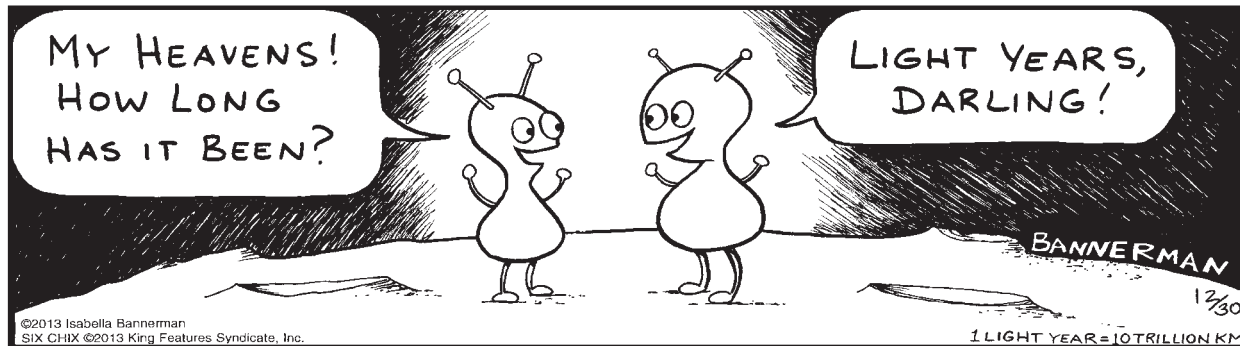
AREAS OF CONCERN

Bonds are one area of concern. Because interest rates on fixed income, particularly benchmarks like 10-year U.S. Treasury notes, fell so much over the last

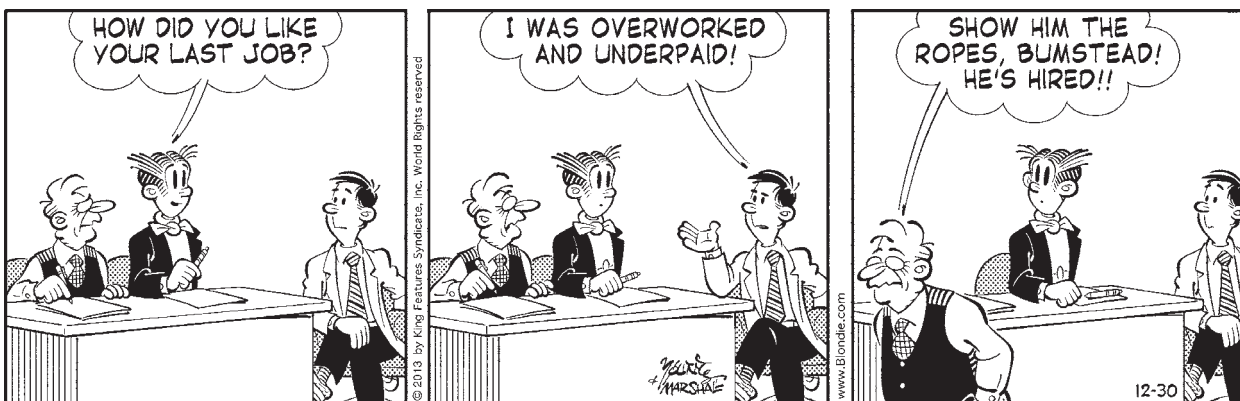
Mutts



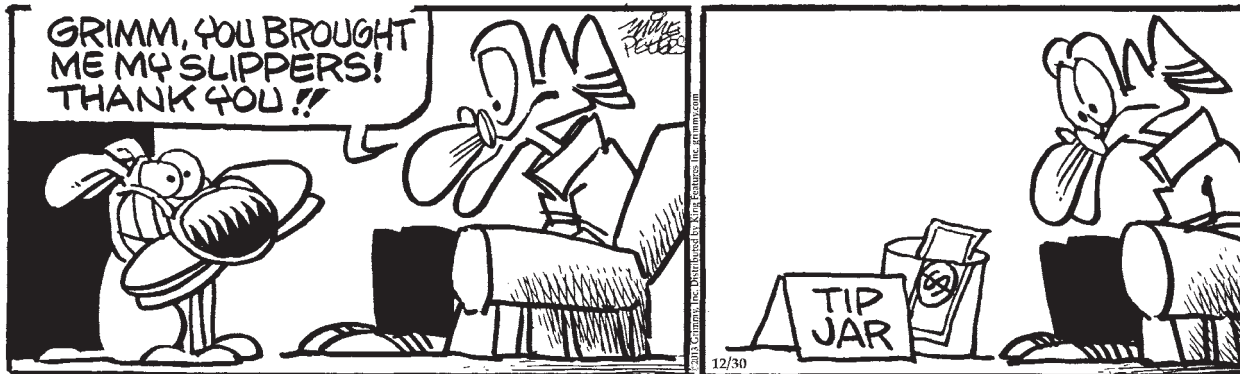
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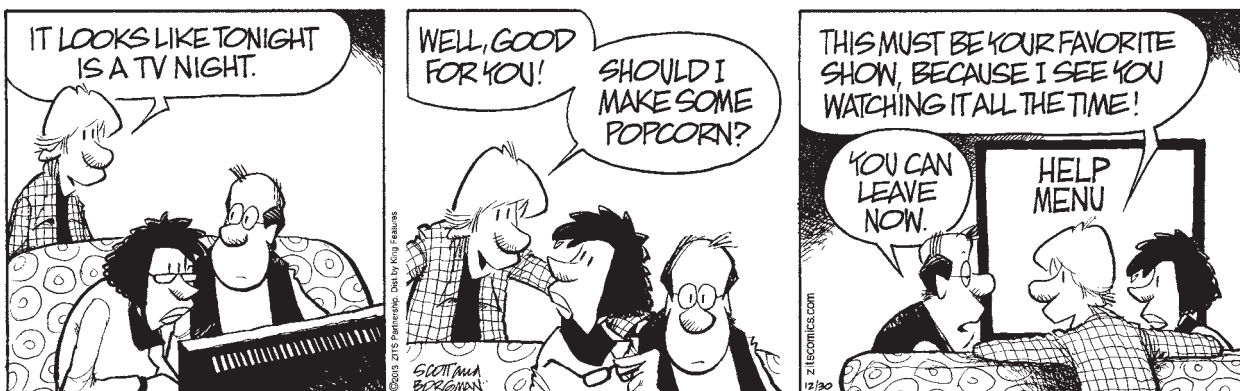
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Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 7 | 8 | | 5 | | 9 | | 1 |
| | | 3 | 8 | 1 | 4 | | | |
| | | | | 6 | 4 | 8 | 3 | |
| | | 7 | | 2 | | 3 | | |
| | 9 | | | | | | 5 | |
| | | 4 | | 8 | | 1 | | |
| 6 | 8 | 5 | 2 | | | | | |
| | | | 9 | 6 | 3 | 5 | | |
| 1 | | 9 | | 7 | | 6 | 4 | |

Difficulty Level ★

12/30

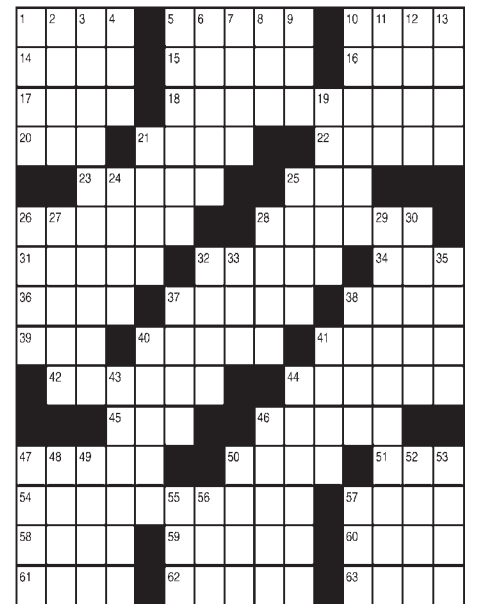
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Saturday's puzzle answer

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 8 |
| 6 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 9 |
| 1 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 4 |
| 2 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| 8 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 7 |
| 4 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 6 |
| 9 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 5 |

ACROSS

- In __; jokingly
- Tiny European nation
- Learn by __; memorize
- Declare openly
- Bubbling away on the stove
- Make a salary
- Metric weight unit, for short
- Stole from a store
- Samuel's teacher
- Sitting upon
- Hoaxes
- Crouch in fear
- Spicy
- Prison guard
- Seven Dwarfs, by profession
- Actor Rob __
- Astaire & Dryer
- Attilla the __
- Greek letters
- Check recipient
- City in Nevada
- Actor Caesar
- West Point student
- Water lily
- Purify raw ore
- Clunker
- Keats' __ to a "Nightingale"
- Recluse
- Frighten
- Empty space
- __ a long way to Tipperary...
- Serious cut
- Glasgow native
- Linkletter and Garfunkel
- Waterbirds
- Great anger
- Finest
- __ up; relaxed
- As __ as molasses



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/30/13

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|--------|
| PIN | RABBI | IDLE |
| ABED | ELLEN | MEAN |
| WISE | FLOAT | BAND |
| STATUETTE | IRKS | |
| DENY | RIB | |
| SPREAD | TRAVESTY | |
| CLINK | BRUCE | TEE |
| OATS | TOAST | PAPA |
| ONE | DEBIT | SABER |
| PESKIE | LEST | LESSEN |
| INN | BOPS | |
| CRAB | ASSISTANT | |
| HUGO | GOODS | GEOM |
| USES | ESTEE | ERGO |
| MESH | ROOTS | DAB |

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12/30/13

DOWN

- TV's __ and the Fatman
- "See no __"
- Attentive care

- Rare bill
- Learn well
- Hate
- Stunt pilot's maneuver
- Money left for the waiter
- Laundry soap brand
- Prove false
- Quaker __; classic cereal
- Alder or ash
- Split __; hair problem
- Actor Jeremy
- Fills with wonder
- Bullfight shouts
- Conceal
- New York team
- As light __
- Encounter
- Like a question asked for effect and not for an answer
- Daybreak
- Lose color
- Bread variety
- Prying
- Window glass
- Actor's part
- Apple drink
- Terra firma
- Woods
- Enrolled in
- Not tight
- Bacon chunk
- Be concerned
- Performs
- Competes
- African nation
- One-dish meal
- Grow old
- Pekoe, for one
- Last year's jrs.

Pennington Column: Giants need work to avoid repeat of this season

BILL PENNINGTON

© 2013 New York Times

It was late on a mid-October night when Eli Manning's voice cracked, a trembling quiver that said what everyone around him already knew: The New York Giants' 2013 season, after six weeks, was irretrievably broken and ruined.

At a lectern near the locker room in Chicago, Manning was speaking minutes after yet another late rally had failed, after a potentially game-winning fingertip catch had instead turned into a familiar and crushing interception. His usual sing-song, untroubled manner of speech was halting and uneven.

"It's not fun playing this game and losing and not feeling like you're helping your team," Manning said. "It's just not working out."

It was an emblematic moment for the Giants, and not just because the usually unflappable Manning was nearly brought to tears. A deeply flawed, ill-conceived team was laid bare, free from excuses. With the team 0-6, what was apparent was that this was just not working out.

But how did that happen? And so swiftly?

The blame can go in al-

most every direction - underperforming players, injuries, bloated salaries, poor personnel decisions.

As general manager Jerry Reese said during his only public comments this season: "Everybody has a lot of opinions about what went wrong. As far as I'm concerned, everybody is right."

The explanation of what went wrong with the 2013 Giants is not complicated, though the fix may be. In essence, the responsibility for the Giants' first losing season since 2004 can be traced to one overarching miscalculation.

The Giants took expensive and risky gambles on several players who were injury prone or aging, or both. When those gambles failed, the team's absence of depth, the result of years of poor draft choices, was exposed.

It was an incurable combination. As the astounding series of injuries mounted - the Giants have used 46 starting players, almost a league record - the second string was generally not laced with enough talent because important players selected in recent drafts were not of NFL quality.

Nearly half the Giants' draft picks since the 2007

Super Bowl season have been busts, unwanted and drummed out of the league.

So when the anchors of the offensive line from two seasons ago, guard Chris Snee and center David Baas, were lost to injury, the Giants were grasping at straws. The remaining reserves were inexperienced, and only rookie Justin Pugh was a high draft pick. It did not help that the highest-paid lineman, left tackle Will Beatty, was struggling.

The result was chaos in a Giants backfield crowded with backpedaling offensive linemen and hard-charging defenders.

In times like these, the Giants have traditionally sought refuge in a stout rushing game powered by seasoned running backs. But in another gamble of sorts, the Giants entrusted that pivotal area to the smallish second-year player David Wilson and his oft-injured backup Andre Brown.

Wilson fumbled twice in the first game, never found his stride and by midseason was sidelined with a neck injury that may end his career. Brown broke his leg in the final preseason game, the same leg he broke last season. □

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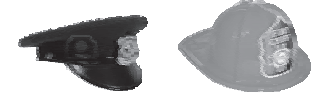
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201053

Tablets a hit with kids, but experts worry

BREE FOWLER

AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tablet computers are so easy to use that even a 3-year-old can master them.

And that has some pediatricians and other health experts worried.

Since navigating a tablet generally doesn't require the ability to type or read, children as young as toddlers can quickly learn how to stream movies, scroll through family photos or play simple games.

That ease-of-use makes tablets —and smartphones— popular with busy parents who use them to pacify their kids during car rides, restaurant outings or while they're at home trying to get dinner on the table. And many feel a little less guilty about it if they think there's educational value to the apps and games their children use. The devices are expected to rank among the top holiday gifts for children this year. Gadget makers such as Samsung have introduced tablets specifically designed for kids and many manufacturers of adult tablets now include parental controls. Those products are in addition to the slew of kiddie tablets produced by electronic toy makers such as LeapFrog, Vtech and Toys R Us. But some experts note there's no evidence that screen time — whether from a TV or tablet — provides any educational or developmental benefits for babies and toddlers. Yet it takes away from activities that do promote brain development, such as non-electronic toys and adult interaction.

They also say that too much screen time has been linked to behavior



In this Dec. 3, 2013, photo, Adam Cohen watches as his son Marc, 5, uses a tablet at their home in New York. Tablets of all types are expected to rank among the top holiday gifts for children this year, but some experts and advocates question the educational or developmental benefits for youngsters.

Associated Press

problems and delayed social development in older children.

Dr. Dimitri Christakis, a pediatrician at Seattle Children's Hospital, points out that iPads have only been on the market for a little over three years, which means tablet-related research is still in its infancy. Christakis says educational games and apps have some value if they engage a child and prompt them to interact with the device, but cautioned that if all children do is watch videos on their tablets, then it's just like watching TV, which has a limited ability to engage a child.

He also notes that parents need to be mindful of whether tablet time is replacing more important activities such as sleeping,

reading or interacting with adults. He says that while the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends

no more than one to two hours of screen time a day for kids over the age of two, he thinks one hour is



The Chaparrastique volcano shoots a cloud of gas and ash about three miles (five kilometers) into the air as seen from the city of San Miguel, El Salvador, Sunday Dec. 30, 2013.

Associated Press

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — Authorities in El Salvador evacuated an area around the Chaparrastique volcano after the peak shot a cloud of gas and ash about 3 miles (5 kilometers) into the air on Sunday.

Civil Defense Director

El Salvador begins evacuations near Chaparrastique

Jorge Melendez said a yellow alert had been issued and investigators had been sent to the area to look for signs of fresh lava, but that none has been detected so far. "We have implemented emergency measures to evacuate villages located within 3 kilometers of the volcano," Melendez said. Shelters have been set up for the evacuees, but Melendez said some inhabitants had been loath to leave their homes. "One has to leave for one's own safety," he said.

Assistant Health Minister Eduardo Espinoza said two people had been treated at hospitals for respiratory problems apparently linked to the eruption, "but we do

plenty.

"The single most important thing for children is time with parents and caregivers," he says. "Nothing is more important in terms of social development. If time with the tablet comes at the expense of that, that's not good."

Dr. Rahil Briggs, a pediatric psychologist at New York's Montefiore Medical Center, says tablet usage needs to be limited for the youngest of children, because too much screen time can slow language development. And since there's very little research out there so far, experts still don't know exactly how much is too much, she says.

For older children, Briggs says too much tablet use can slow social development. She notes that the solitary nature of the activity means that kids aren't using that time to learn how to make friends or pick up on social cues.

Some experts, however, believe tablets and smartphones possess unique educational benefits. □

not have any serious cases to report."

"We are providing assistance to people evacuating, and we are asking them to protect themselves against the gases, which can affect the respiratory tract," Espinoza said. He also urged inhabitants near the volcano to avoid drinking from local water sources.

The 7,025-foot (2,129-meter) volcano is located about 90 miles (145 kilometers) east of San Salvador, the capital. Its last significant eruption was in 1976. San Miguel is one of the country's largest cities and is located 30 miles (50 kilometers) from the volcano. □

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"Hobbit," "Frozen" lead box office to record year

JESSICA HERNDON

AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Over the bustling post-Christmas weekend, Peter Jackson's "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug" continued to lead the box office, landing in the No. 1 slot for the third weekend in a row.

The Warner Bros. prequel earned \$30 million, bringing the domestic gross to \$190.3 million, according to studio estimates on Sunday.

Disney's animated adventure, "Frozen," took the No. 2 position, earning \$28.9 million over the weekend and \$248.4 million domestically after six weeks at the multiplex.

"Frozen" probably had the best release date of the year because they positioned themselves to completely dominate the family film marketplace over the holidays," said box-office analyst Paul Dergarabedian of Rentrak. "To be No. 2 in its sixth week is a total reflection of that."

Reigning box-office champion "Hobbit," "really contributed to this record box office that we have at the end of the year," he added.

ed. "With 'Hobbit' and 'Frozen,' we are talking \$450 million at the box office between those two films alone. They are absolutely killing it here at the end of the year."

This year is poised to be a banner one at the box office, and it is projected to surpass 2012's \$10.8 billion by nearly 1 percent, making this the highest annual take ever.

Paramount held two slots in the top five over the weekend, with the comedies "Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues," starring Will Farrell, and "The Wolf of Wall Street," featuring Leonardo DiCaprio. Sequel "Anchorman 2" came in at No. 3 with \$20.2 million, and Martin Scorsese's dark comedy, "Wolf," took the No. 5 spot, earning \$19 million after opening at No. 2 on Christmas Day with \$9.15 million.

"Some people are calling the performance of 'Anchorman' a bit of a disappointment, but it will be a \$100 million gross at the end of the day," Dergarabedian said. "All of the marketing certainly raised its profile. It will have a

good showing."

"Anchorman" met studio expectations over the Christmas holiday.

"We are thrilled and we feel the movie will play well in theaters for a while," said Don Harris, president of distribution at Paramount. "The first film brought in \$84 million, and this one will be well north of that."

At nearly three hours long, "Wolf" does not have as many showings in a day as the rest of the pictures currently in theaters, yet it's holding its own at the multiplex. "The movie is very much out there in terms of content, and that's a good thing," added Harris. "It's different than anything else in the marketplace. I think people are surprised that it's a lot of fun."

At No. 4, Sony Pictures corruption saga, "American Hustle," made \$19.6 million. David O. Russell's entertaining take on the Abscam political corruption undercover investigation of the 1970s, starring Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper, has grossed \$60 million domestically and gained seven Golden



This image released by Paramount Pictures shows Will Ferrell as Ron Burgundy, left, and Christina Applegate as Veronica Corningstone in a scene from "Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues." Associated Press

Globe nominations.

Another Oscar hopeful, "Saving Mr. Banks," Disney's making of "Mary Poppins" story, starring Emma Thompson and Tom Hanks, came in at No. 6, making \$14.3 million.

Fox's "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," Ben Stiller's dramatic turn, which he also directed, took seventh place, earning \$13 million. "'Mitty' is a feel-good film and with the combination of our excellent exit polls and audience friendly rating at PG-13, I think we are going to play well into the

New Year," said Chris Aronson, president of distribution at Twentieth Century Fox. "This has been an incredibly fragmented and healthy marketplace as we're expected to finish with a record year."

And despite lackluster reviews, Keanu Reeves' martial-arts film "47 Ronin" managed to slide into the top 10 at No. 9 with \$9.9 million in its opening weekend.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak. □



In this undated file film publicity image originally released by 20th Century Fox, the character Neytiri, voiced by Zoe Saldana, right, and the character Jake, voiced by Sam Worthington are shown in a scene from, "Avatar."

Associated Press

NICK PERRY

RYAN NAKASHIMA

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In the old days, filmmakers flocked to Hollywood for its abundant sunshine, beautiful people and sandy beaches. But today a new filmmaking diaspora is spreading across the globe to places like Vancouver, London and Wellington, New Zealand.

Fueled by politicians doling out generous tax breaks, filmmaking talent is migrating to where the money is. The result is an incentives arms race that pits California against governments around the world and allows powerful studios — with hundreds of millions of dollars at their disposal — to cherry-pick the best deals. The most recent iteration of the phenomenon

Hollywood struggles against new film meccas

came earlier this month when James Cameron announced plans to shoot and produce the next three "Avatar" sequels largely in New Zealand. What Cameron gets out of the deal is a 25 percent rebate on production costs, as long as his company spends at least \$413 million on the three films.

"There's no place in the world that we could make these sequels more cost effectively," says producer Jon Landau. It is neither the archipelago's volcanoes nor its glaciers that are attractive, because the "Avatar" movies will be shot indoors. Sure, Peter Jackson's award-winning special effects infrastructure is there, but the decid-

ing factor was the money. "We looked at other places," says Landau. But in the end, "it was this rebate." In exchange, the local economy will benefit hugely, Landau says, comparing the ripple effect to the boost that comes from new home construction. "We're doing lumber, we're catering for hundreds of people a day. We're housing people in hotels. The deal was 'the best Christmas present we could have possibly hoped for,'" says Alex Lee, an Auckland, New Zealand-based entertainment lawyer. The news is especially welcome because the local screen industry is facing a potential drought: The Starz pay TV series "Spartacus" finished this

year and Peter Jackson's "The Hobbit" trilogy is set to wrap next year. Thanks to the "Avatar" sequels, the 1,100 workers at Weta Digital Ltd., the ground-breaking digital effects house Jackson co-founded in 1993, can keep plugging away through 2018.

"It would have been a real shame if we had lost any of that talent and they had to move to follow the films," says Wellington Mayor Celia Wade-Brown.

Driving the trend are powerful global forces squeezing the entertainment industry. Falling DVD sales are putting pressure on movie-making budgets, while the demand for ever-more-amazing special effects grows. □

Grave marker project helps bury the blues

ALAN SCHER ZAGIER

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Blues guitarist Tommy Bankhead rubbed shoulders with some of the genre's royalty, from Howlin' Wolf and Elmore James to Albert King and Sonny Boy Williamson.

But visitors to the overgrown St. Louis cemetery where Bankhead was buried more than a decade ago would never know his musical legacy. Or his name.

Be it neglect, inattention or hard times, Bankhead's family never added a grave marker to his burial plot. That will soon change thanks to the Killer Blues Headstone Project, a nonprofit effort to bring belated recognition to long-forgotten blues musicians.

Though the group has posthumously honored musicians as far away as California, its efforts are concentrated in a fertile blues corridor that stretches from the Mississippi Delta through St. Louis, north to Chicago and Michigan.

"These guys gave so much to America via music," said Aaron Pritchard, the project's vice president. "They



In this photo made Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013, Aaron Pritchard wipes off a headstone after laying the marker on the previously unmarked grave of blues musician Aaron Sparks in Crestwood, Mo. Pritchard is part of the Killer Blues Headstone Project, a nonprofit effort to posthumously honor sometimes long-forgotten blues musicians with grave markers. The group has laid 22 headstones to date, with several more complete but awaiting placement.

deserve a headstone." Pritchard, 33, grew up on rock 'n' roll and discovered the St. Louis blues scene after high school but stopped playing music for a living to raise his two small children. A retail manager by day, Pritchard must be equal parts musicologist, cultural historian, archivist and Internet detective for the

blues genealogy project. Several years ago, he met a kindred spirit in Steven Salter of Whitehall, Michigan, whose own search for his musical idols began with a detour to the Chicago area while en route to the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.

After stopping at the graves of McKinley Morganfield,

better known as Muddy Waters, and Chester Burnett (aka Howlin' Wolf), Salter found an unmarked grave for blues pianist Otis Spann. A letter bemoaning Spann's fate to a blues magazine ignited a successful fundraiser and convinced Salter to launch the headstone project in 2008.

"I figured if I didn't get to

see them while they were alive, I could at least stop by their gravesites and pay my respects," the 62-year-old said. "When I got there, there was nothing but a piece of grass."

While heartfelt, the project's efforts remain modest. They have laid 22 headstones, with several more completed but awaiting placement. The flat grave markers cost between \$300 and \$400 each and are engraved with the artist's dates of birth and death, along with images of keyboards, saxophones, musical notes or guitars.

There's no shortage of candidates: The project's website lists another two dozen late musicians whose earthly whereabouts are unknown. And Pritchard carries a dog-eared reference book that lists the vital statistics of more than 1,400 blues players, organized by state. The headstone project follows the path of earlier efforts like the Mount Zion Memorial Fund, which emerged two decades ago when the Mississippi church where blues legend Robert Johnson was buried faced foreclosure. □

Tightrope walker who crossed Niagara Falls dies

PARIS (AP) — The celebrated French tightrope walker and chair-balancer known as Henry's, who balanced high above the Alps, Niagara Falls and for months over a supermarket in his hometown, has died.

Maurice Vincent, a senator and the mayor of Saint-Etienne, said in a statement that Henry's died Friday.

Henry's, whose real name was Henri Rechatin, once walked along the cable that carries cable cars to the summit of the Aiguille du Midi in the Alps. Vincent said Henry's once balanced above the Grand Canyon and that such international stunts helped promote Saint-Etienne around the world.

At Niagara Falls in 1975, he balanced on a platform attached to a motorcycle



French tightrope walker Henri Rechatin walks over the Saint-Remy sur Durolle countryside in central France, in this July 16, 1967 file photo, as he breaks the specialty's world record of the time.

that his friend rode across the cable over the Whirlpool Rapids, all while Rechatin's wife hung from a pole he carried on his shoulders, according to the Niagara Falls Public Library.

Several times, atop tall buildings or overlooking precipices, he sat on a chair balanced on its back legs, which were perched on upside down glasses which in turn sat on another chair, also propped up on glasses.

One such stunt was in 1996 on the edge of the roof of Moscow's Rossiya Hotel, 44 meters (144 feet) up.

But Rechatin is perhaps most famous in France for spending six months in 1973 on a cable 20 meters (66 feet) above a supermarket in Saint-Etienne. □

Associated Press.

An Ode To Spam



GAIL COLLINS
© 2013 New York Times

I would like to take time now to thank everyone who sent me holiday messages via the Internet: The wishes of good cheer, the reports of family achievements in the year past, and the multiple requests for my email or bank password.

Possibly that last group was not acting on its own volition. Just last week I got a note from the novelist Erica Jong, asking me for my email password, and another from the historian Carol Berkin, requesting my Bank of America account number. Thanks to my skills as a journalist, I instantly deduced that both were fraudulent.

Also, I had immediate doubts about a message from another prominent author I know, offering to help me turn my computer "into a money-making machine." And I quickly figured out that the email I appeared to have sent myself, offering an inside track on "male penis meds" did not really come from me.

I have been feeling pretty darned proud of my own increasing technological sophistication.

True, I am still not fully skilled in the operation of our home television, but I blame that on Time Warner Cable, which is responsible for half the problems in our modern world. Someday, we're going to find out it was Time Warner Cable that screwed up the Obamacare website and then I will say that I told you so.

But, on the plus side, I've refrained from responding to a number of people in my address file who suddenly wrote to announce that they were stranded in remote locations and in desperate need of a money transfer. My husband, Dan, got one recently from a woman who begged him to send her money to get back from Japan. He quickly deduced that if the situation had been genuine, she would not be reaching out to the people who adopted her poodle in 2009.

Our sense of being in semi-control may not last long. Finn Brunton, the author of "Spam: A Shadow History of the Internet," says scammers are getting more sophisticated, scrubbing their targets' Facebook pages to

pull out details that will make the pleas for help more convincing. (What if the Japan email had said: "Dan - do it for the dog!") In self-protection, Brunton says he's avoided ever getting a Facebook page: "Whenever there's a new privacy scandal I say - being friendless pays off again."

A lot of the old classic email come-ons are now relegated to spam limbo before we even set eyes on them. I like to visit them occasionally and say a mental hello to Sung Lee of Hong Kong, who is unflagging in his attempts to get me to accept a money transfer of \$43,600,000.

But the holiday spam creativity award goes to a correspondent who said he was "Rainer Neske, Head of Private & Business Clients at Deutsche Bank" who offered to give me around \$2.5 million if I would help him drain the account of a dead client. While the scheme is pretty familiar, the letter is in a category all its own when it comes to level of detail. It goes on for pages, and you learn quite a lot about the difficulty the author had in dealing with this demanding client and his shock in discovering said client had died of a heart attack in Cannes. There was also a touching concern about my own reliability. ("I do not particularly know you so I would wait on your response to judge your level of transparency and honesty. ...")

It turns out there really is a Rainer Neske who really is head of Private & Business Clients at Deutsche Bank. However, a spokeswoman for the bank said that he: 1) did not write the letter, 2) knows how to spell Deutsche Bank and 3) does not want to help me get \$2.5 million.

Let's hope that he's recovered from the experience. Jong said her encounter with a hacker from hell left her feeling "invaded and helpless" as well as nursing a rather dim view of the Internet in general.

"I fully expect someday I'll go into my pension account and find it empty," she said darkly. Berkin wants to find the culprit who stole her email identity just so she can bill him/her for the time it took to assure all her friends and relatives: "Yes, I changed my password."

Ah, the passwords. This is the price we pay for living in the 21st century. We have wonder drugs and Skype, but we also have 200 passwords, none of which are supposed to involve names and numbers we would naturally remember. "When you call specialists, they say: 'Change your password every month,'" Jong said. "Then they say: 'Don't store it in your computer.'"

Erica and I are considering a joint venture for the marketing of charm bracelets bearing nothing but little gold passwords.

"Or you could have tattoos all over your body," Berkin said. "Which would appeal to many of the students I've taught."

We can make 2014 the Year of the Illustrated Person. Or the Illustrated Password. □



Bits And Barbarism



PAUL KRUGMAN
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This is a tale of three money pits. It's also a tale of monetary regress - of the strange determination of many people to turn the clock back on centuries of progress.

The first money pit is an actual pit - the Porgera open-pit gold mine in Papua New Guinea, one of the world's top producers. The mine has a terrible reputation for both human rights abuses (rapes, beatings and killings by security personnel) and environmental damage (vast quantities of potentially toxic tailings dumped into a nearby river). But gold prices, while down from their recent peak, are still three times what they were a decade ago, so dig they must.

The second money pit is a lot stranger: the Bitcoin mine in Reykjanesbaer, Iceland. Bitcoin is a digital currency that has value because ... well, it's hard to say exactly why, but for the time being at least people are willing to buy it because they believe other people will be willing to buy it. It is, by design, a kind of virtual gold. And like gold, it can be mined: you can create new bitcoins, but only by solving very complex mathematical problems that require both a lot of computing power and a lot of electricity to run the computers.

Hence the location in Iceland, which has cheap electricity from hydropower and an abundance of cold air to cool those furiously churning machines. Even so, a lot of real resources are being used to create virtual objects with no clear use.

The third money pit is hypothetical. Back in 1936 the economist John Maynard Keynes argued that increased government spending was needed to restore full employment. But then, as now, there was strong political resistance to any such proposal. So Keynes whimsically suggested an alternative: have the government bury bottles full of cash in disused coal mines, and let the private sector spend its own money to dig the cash back up. It would be better, he agreed, to have the government build roads, ports and other useful things - but even perfectly useless spending would give the economy a much-needed boost.

Clever stuff - but Keynes wasn't finished. He went on to point out that the real-life activity of gold mining was a lot like his thought experiment. Gold miners were, after all, going to great lengths to dig cash out of the ground, even though unlimited amounts of cash could be created at essentially no cost with the printing press.

And no sooner was gold dug up than much of it was buried again, in places like the gold vault of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, where hundreds of thousands of gold bars sit, doing nothing in particular.

Keynes would, I think, have been sardonically amused to learn how little has changed in the past three generations. Public spending to fight unemployment is still anathema; miners are still spoiling the landscape to add to idle hoards of gold. (Keynes dubbed the gold standard a "barbarous relic.") Bitcoin just adds to the joke. Gold, after all, has at least some real uses, e.g., to fill cavities; but now we're burning up

resources to create "virtual gold" that consists of nothing but strings of digits.

I suspect, however, that Adam Smith would have been dismayed.

Smith is often treated as a conservative patron saint, and he did indeed make the original case for free markets. It's less often mentioned, however, that he also argued strongly for bank regulation - and that he offered a classic paean to the virtues of paper currency. Money, he understood, was a way to facilitate commerce, not a source of national prosperity - and paper money, he argued, allowed commerce to proceed without tying up much of a nation's wealth in a "dead stock" of silver and gold.

So why are we tearing up the highlands of Papua New Guinea to add to our dead stock of gold and, even more bizarrely, running powerful computers 24/7 to add to a dead stock of digits?

Talk to gold bugs and they'll tell you that paper money comes from governments, which can't be trusted not to debase their currencies.

The odd thing, however, is that for all the talk of currency debasement, such debasement is getting very hard to find. It's not just that after years of dire warnings about runaway inflation, inflation in advanced countries is clearly too low, not too high. Even if you take a global perspective, episodes of really high inflation have become rare. Still, hyperinflation hype springs eternal.

Bitcoin seems to derive its appeal from more or less the same sources, plus the added sense that it's high-tech and algorithmic, so it must be the wave of the future. But don't let the fancy trappings fool you: What's really happening is a determined march to the days when money meant stuff you could jingle in your purse. In tropics and tundra alike, we are for some reason digging our way back to the 17th century. □

A Life Of Noodles Comes Full Circle

JULIA MOSKIN

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NEW YORK - At 50, Ivan Orkin appears to have pulled off a chain of unprecedented feats.

He is the first American brave (or foolish) enough to open his own ramen shop in Tokyo. (He now has two.)

He is the first chef to publish a cookbook/memoir, "Ivan Ramen," in the United States before even opening a restaurant here.

And last week, he may have become the first chef in Manhattan to intercept a bathroom-bound customer

weed broth, chicken fat, pork fat and his signature rye noodles.

He is having a hard time making peace with those noodles. "I can't believe I'm not making my own," he said ruefully. "That was the first thing I got right in Tokyo." Instead, they are made for him at Sun Noodle in Teterboro, N.J., a supplier to preferred ramen destinations like Momofuku Noodle Bar, Ramen Yebisu and Ganso.

These restaurants are part of a greater New York ramen boom: Traditional purveyors like Ippudo and Totto Ra-

rants that will house his vision. That is not necessarily the most "authentic" ramen, but the ramen of his own Japanese-American-Jewish-chef dreams: a soup with the right balance of pork, chicken, smoked fish, soy and salt; noodles with the ideal combination of chew and give; toppings that set it off instead of overwhelming it. The recipe, as published in "Ivan Ramen," is 36 pages long.

"I have officially become one of the ramen geeks," he said.

How does a self-proclaimed

Americans to the idea that ramen could be more than noodles and MSG in a plastic foam cup.)

After graduation in 1985, he moved to Tokyo without a job or a place to live. Since then, he has never been away from Japan for long. He married a Japanese woman, Tami, whose job took them to California; next they moved to New York so he could attend the Culinary Institute of America. He spent two years working in some of New York's top kitchens in the 1990s like Lutèce and Mesa Grill.

worst had already happened."

Over the next few years, Orkin traveled often between New York and Tokyo, where Isaac's grandparents live. A few years later, on a blind date at a ramen shop (tonkotsu style, with lots of pork bone marrow and fat), he met the woman he would marry, Mari, who was also raising a son, Alex, as a single parent.

They settled in Tokyo, and for three years, he picked up the kids at school, packed their bento boxes and learned Japanese home cooking (chicken teriyaki and the popular omu raisu, fried rice topped with a sheet of cooked egg, both accompanied by plenty of ketchup). When he got restless and started thinking about opening his own restaurant, doing it in Tokyo seemed impossible. Although he had become tremendously opinionated about ramen, he doubted there would be an audience for Japanese food cooked by a foreigner.

But he began to craft his own ideal bowl: light and clear, with double soup (two different kinds of broth mixed in the bowl), double fat (chicken and pork) and minimal toppings.

"At that point, I was a very experienced Western chef," he said, "but even the way I knew how to make stock was useless." He relearned and rethought, and the first Ivan Ramen opened in 2007, to excellent reviews and overnight success. "I did everything to make sure my restaurant wouldn't be a freak show," he said. "People had to come because they liked the food, not just to see an American making ramen." He has moved his family, which now includes a third son, Ren, 4, back to Westchester, in Dobbs Ferry. He has a fourth restaurant on the way on the Lower East Side, which will be "more than ramen," he promises. There are countless noodle frontiers still to explore: hiyashi (cold) ramen, tsukemen, mazemen, udon, somen. "As a chef, you owe it to yourself to cook from the heart," he said. "Part of mine is in New York, and the other part will always be in Japan." □



Classic shoyu ramen at Ivan Ramen Slurp Shop in the Gotham West Market, New York. Chef Ivan Orkin has pulled off some unprecedented feats: he is the first American brave (or foolish) enough to open his own ramen shop in Tokyo, and is also the first chef to publish a cookbook/memoir, "Ivan Ramen," in the U.S. before even opening a restaurant here.

(Brent Herrig/The New York Times)

and order her back to her seat.

"She got up right after the ramen hit the table!" he said in self-defense, citing the first commandment of ramen: It must be eaten while still volcanically hot.

With the opening of Ivan Ramen Slurp Shop in Hell's Kitchen last month, Orkin became a New York restaurateur, a title 20 years in the making. A long stainless-steel counter in his restaurant is lined on one side with customers, and on the other with ramen ingredients: slow-cooked pork belly, scallions, soft-cooked eggs, chicken broth, dashi or sea-

men are expanding, and mavericks like Orkin and Yuji Haraguchi of Yuji Ramen are reinventing the bowl. "We are very chef-driven," said Kenshiro Uki, Sun Noodle's East Coast manager. The company custom-makes more than 100 variations on ramen: thick and thin, flat and round, wavy and straight, white, yellow and even black, colored with charred bamboo leaf.

It is not hands-on enough for Orkin, but for now, he doesn't have the time. His long-chaotic life as a chef has ordered itself around one dish, ramen, and he is racing to build the restau-

slacker from Long Island go from mediocre high school student to stay-at-home dad in Tokyo to international ramen impresario?

Orkin describes his family's attitude toward food as "culinary apathy." But one seed of his future was planted in Syosset, his hometown: At 15, he got a job washing dishes at a Japanese restaurant and was introduced to real Japanese food by the line cooks.

A nagging curiosity about Japan eventually led him to the University of Colorado as a Japanese major. (He also saw the film "Tampopo," which introduced many

"For some reason, those crazy jobs settled me," he said. "I was always an argumentative know-it-all, but the kitchen taught me to suck it up and shut my mouth."

His son, Isaac, was born in 1996. Orkin took a steady corporate-chef job, and the couple bought a house in Mamaroneck, N.Y., in Westchester County. Then lightning struck: Five months pregnant with their second child, his wife spiked a fever. Three days later, she and the baby she was carrying died.

"In the end, my wife's death made me more forceful, less afraid to fail," he said. "The